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VANESSA





25.  
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I should tell you, I  
thought to have heard from  
you in a week, according to your  
promise but that week consisted  
of fourteen days which were  
after the first seven very long  
long ones ~~typical~~ of some of never  
expected to have another letter from  
you first because I thought you had  
quite forgot me and because I was  
so very ill that I thought I should  
have died which if I had it would  
have been a great loss to you and I  
am glad to hear you are well and happy  
but ever since I received your  
letter which was left Friday I have been in the well again

just that day last night I saw you  
I have done all that I can in  
power to follow your example  
for fear of troubling you but find  
I can not differ writing to you  
any longer when I intended to write  
I thought you might find it too late  
or you find perhaps you might  
but instead of that to find that I do  
to another and that a love letter  
how do you think I could suggest it  
but upon my word when I see you  
I have a very small & trip to you  
about that letter. I have asked you  
all the questions I used to ask  
times and don't find them answered  
at all to my satisfaction

# VANESSA

AND HER CORRESPONDENCE  
WITH JONATHAN SWIFT

*THE LETTERS EDITED FOR THE  
FIRST TIME FROM THE ORIGINALS*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
A. MARTIN FREEMAN

Author of "Thomas Love Peacock: A Critical Study"

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TO  
HANSON ORMEROD

## PREFACE

FOR the pleasure I have had in making this book I am indebted to Mr. Robin Flower, of the Department of MSS., British Museum, who indicated the manuscripts to me and suggested that I should edit them, and placed at my disposal the work he had done on them for the official Catalogue. The reader must participate in my gratitude to him for having corrected or confirmed my wavering interpretation of many difficult writings, checked my transcript and subsequently compared certain portions of the proof with the manuscript. His generous collaboration at all stages has enabled me to claim for the text of the letters here printed a degree of accuracy of which, but for association with an expert, it would have been hard to feel satisfied. But in case subsequent transcribers should condemn my readings of "carver" in No. XLIV. and "tantony" in No. ii., I here proclaim my sole responsibility for them.

My thanks are also due to Miss Lucy Broadwood for transcribing a letter in the library of Christ Church, Oxford; to Dr. J. S.



Crone, J.P., editor of *The Irish Book-lover*, for information concerning old maps of Dublin and other matters; to the Rev. R. Northridge, Rector of St. Andrew's Church, Dublin, for transcribing an entry in the St. Andrew's Burial Register.

Finally, I have to thank Mr. Shane Leslie for endcavouring to follow up the clues to the later history of the manuscripts mentioned on page 43 of the Introduction. His letter, which reached me too late for me to alter what I had written, tells me that his inquiries have not resulted in any information tending to confirm the theory suggested by the addressed envelope there described. Mr. Leslie writes: "I am afraid there is no proof that the letters were ever at Glaslough. The Miss Leslie was a friend of the Morrisons, with whom she stayed, and probably left the envelope in the book by mistake. . . . Swift was often at Glaslough and wrote poems to the Leslies. My great-grandmother left a tradition that he had preached from the old wooden pulpit destroyed in the seventies." This point, then, like so much else in the history of Vanessa and of her manuscripts, is at present obscure.

Nobody can study any portion of Swift's correspondence without making constant use of the edition in six volumes by Dr. Elrington Ball. My obligations to that work are sufficiently obvious in the annotations to the Miscellaneous Letters in Part III of this

volume. If references to it are less frequent in Part I, this is only because access to the original manuscripts has supplied me with evidence which was not available to Dr. Ball when compiling his valuable edition.

Shortly after Esther Vanhomrigh's death, there was a project for publishing *Cadenus and Vanessa* and her correspondence with Swift, no doubt in one volume. That publication was very properly stopped: the book would have been only too interesting at the time, involving the reputation of several persons still living and providing malice with a weapon after its own heart. It is strange, however, that the project has not been revived for nearly two hundred years, during which time it might be thought that after the spur of personal malice had been shed, the love of gossip which is inherent in most people, though in some disguised as interest in history or literature, would have been sufficiently strong to call for such a volume. But the Swift and Vanessa letters have never even been printed consecutively, except in the edition of Swift's complete works by Sir Walter Scott. The emergence last year of the original manuscripts of the Vanessa correspondence suggested that the materials for the study of this important strand in Swift's biography might now be issued under one cover, together with a latter-day attempt at interpreting them. Almost every possible view of the relations between Swift and Vanessa has already been expressed; and

many writers whose merits claim for them a respectful hearing have been busy with the subject. The excuse for a new summary is that certain details, not always unimportant, now appear more clearly in the light of the autographs. The letters therefore are now printed together, with the addition of a few letters and passages not included in any previous edition, in Part I. Most of the other available documents for the story of Vanessa are gathered together in Part II, while the various scattered allusions to her or her family are utilized in the introductory sketch. The letters in Part III have nothing to do with Vanessa; but since they had remained hitherto unpublished, it seemed advisable to take advantage of the opportunity offered by this edition of printing them in book form.

## INTRODUCTION

### I

ALL London, in the early years of the eighteenth century, knew the name of Miss Anne Long, the famous beauty, toast of the Kiteat Club, a lady to whom the poets sang and the wits paid compliments. And it was inevitable that all men who were fond of society, and received in the best, should contrive to become acquainted with her. It is not therefore surprising that Jonathan Swift, who through his gift of English prose and his capacity for politics was climbing to a social position as distinguished as Miss Long's, should desire to be introduced to her. The matter would appear simple enough. Both were welcome guests in more than one house, they had several acquaintances in common, and Swift was accepted on a very friendly footing as one of a small and strictly light-hearted, bantering circle in the house of Mrs. Vanhomrigh, Miss Long's cousin. But a serious difficulty stood in the way of the introduction. Dr. Swift had made a rule, from which he would not swerve, that any ladies desiring to be known

to him must make special advances, to prove that they did not seek his acquaintance as that of a man like another, but on account of his great merit. Miss Long on the other hand, while acknowledging the justice of his general claim, and even willing, personally, to meet him on his own terms, yet held that she was not justified in so doing, since her action would have the effect of lowering the status of all ladies of the toast afterwards. The case stood undecided for some time, and was at last referred to an arbitrator. On his finding, Mrs. Vanhomrigh's fourteen-year-old son issued a *Decree for Concluding the Treaty of Acquaintance between Dr. Swift and Mrs. Long*, the conditions whereof were distinctly favourable to the Doctor. By this document the weighty affair was settled; in it, too, occurs for the first time in literature the name of Mrs. Vanhomrigh's "fair daughter Hussy."

Mrs. Vanhomrigh was at this time a widow with four children, Hussy or Esther, aged twenty, and three others, the eldest of whom was fifteen. She was comfortably off, but preferred to live as if she were rich, and did so live as far as credit with the local tradesmen allowed her, fond of society, ambitious, and of sufficiently youthful appearance for the gossips to whisper that she was engaged to be married a second time. We may reasonably suppose that she did not wish to be thought older than her looks declared, and was not anxious to

proclaim that her eldest daughter was grown-up. We know definitely that Swift was consistently misled as to Esther's age, believing her to be two or three years younger than she was ; and if he was deceived, so probably were the rest of her London acquaintances. On two accounts it was remarkably easy for Mrs. Vanhomrigh to carry off the deception. She had lately come over from Ireland, and so was not embarrassed by her neighbours' memories ; and Esther was no doubt willing to be eighteen, seventeen, any age that would make it easier for her to avoid a number of social duties which she cordially disliked. For she was a young woman of an unusual type, or of a type considered unusual by her friends, with no taste for cards or entertainments, or for parties, little even for dress ; intelligent and receptive, interested in the things of the mind, yet too idle to study, petulant, self-willed but not strong-willed, delighting in reasonable conversation as much as she hated tattle, and withal very childish. Nothing was further from her heart than the desire to be her mother's rival, and her choice of the nursery in preference to the drawing-room was not likely to provoke much comment among the busy ladies round the card-table.

But a girl of such qualities and idiosyncrasies was not calculated to escape Swift's notice, nor would she fail to distinguish him from the other men who frequented the house. The genius which

shone through his mocking foolery, making it a thing of a different kind to that of Sir Andrew Fountaine and the rest, spoke directly to her and claimed her attention. Here was some one worth listening to, some one who was not merely funny or merely clever, but witty, entertaining, full of the knowledge of affairs and of men, of the wisdom of books ; here, in fact, was the ideal friend and teacher. And to Swift it would appear that he had met a child—almost a child, at least—who was crying out for his guidance. This undeveloped girl, in whom so many possibilities were latent, whose mind was so neglected and who, if left to herself, might never fulfil any of her promise, but with help could be so vastly improved ; this moody, impatient, interesting and interested questioner should not be passed by ; she should be made to “ mind her book,” encouraged to think and develop her faculties, and, later on, grow up to be a fit companion for men of sense. So, for the amusement of the gods, the bond was tied between them.

Of the first few years of their acquaintance there is little to be told. It is sufficiently clear that it soon ripened into friendship ; for when Swift, having known the family for a year or a little over, went to Ireland, he received more than one letter from Esther. At the end of another eighteen months he returned to London ; and from this date became an intimate frequenter of the Vanhom-

rights' house, his letters for the first few months of this period containing more than a hundred references to them. By the beginning of the year 1711 it seems to have been recognized that a special friendship existed between him and Esther. On February 14 he was invited, together with Charles Ford, to celebrate her birthday; and a few days earlier some visitors to the house, wishing to lure him there, sent a message saying that she was ill. He fell into the trap, but was apparently not displeased, for he merely refers to it as a "silly trick," adding that he "rattled off" Esther for it. About this time, too, Stella has her first sniff at the Vanhomrighs, saying that they are people of no consequence, and Swift replies that their company is as good as his own. The whole of this spring he was sleeping in Chelsea, and was at the Vanhomrighs' house twice every day, for he kept his best gown and wig there, wearing an older gown and wig to walk the "five thousand, seven hundred and forty-eight steps" between St. James's and Chelsea. At this time he often dined with the family, himself providing a flask of Florence wine, and in their house he had the use of a small room in which to read and write, while in rainy weather, or when he had no special business or was seized with disinclination for the society of "great folks," he would frequently pass a part of the day with them. In July he sent them "a noble haunch of venison."



Most of these references, taken from the *Journal to Stella*, are to Mrs. Vanhomrigh, or to the family in general and the friends, especially Fountaine and Ford, whom Swift met at her house. Esther is seldom separately mentioned. But there is one passage which must not be passed over, since it shows that Swift, as we have stated above, was not told the truth about Esther's age. In August he writes: "I found Mrs. Vanhomrigh all in confusion, squabbling with her rogue of a landlord. . . . Her eldest daughter is come of age, and going to Ireland to look after her fortune, and get it in her own hands." Vanessa (though she was not yet Vanessa) was then well into her twenty-fourth year. The project of going to Ireland was not however pursued, possibly because she found her studies, as directed by Swift, of greater moment than squabbling with her father's executor. For we know positively that by the end of this year, if not for the whole of it, he was not merely advising but reading with her and teaching her.

There is no reason to doubt that in entering into this relation with Esther, Swift was guiltless of any design beyond what was openly avowed, namely, to persuade her to read and improve her natural abilities. He saw in her the makings of just that kind of woman he most admired, and at the same time saw her backward, uneducated, spoiling in idleness. But it appears plainly from

the first of the unpublished letters in this collection that he thought her in need of some teaching, which was not comprised in their curriculum of studies. The method he chose to impart this was ingenious and characteristic. To observe his action in this matter we must return, for a moment, to Miss Long.

That lady had one characteristic at least in common with her Vanhomrigh kinswoman—a taste for living beyond her means ; which taste she had indulged to an extent which, some months before the time we have now reached, rendered it inconvenient for her to live in London. She accordingly retired to King's Lynn, there to lead a life of sobriety and obscurity and await the death of her grandmother, from whom she expected a substantial legacy ; and in order still further to cover up her tracks and elude creditors she assumed the name of “Mrs. Smyth.” From her dull retreat, where she had fallen ill, she wrote to Swift in the autumn of 1711 a letter which is now lost, and had an answer (also now lost) from him, this answer being probably forwarded by the Vanhomrighs, who knew her address. In December she wrote to him again, telling him to address her as “Mrs. Smyth, near St. Nicholas' Church,” and asking him to communicate directly with her (Letter I). But Swift in his reply did not so address her. He wrote on the cover “Mrs. Long,” and sent the

letter, unsealed, to Esther, with a note asking her, in the style of mystery and confidence, to forward the enclosure (Letter II):

This procedure was clearly not without a motive. It was simpler and easier to direct his letter to "Mrs. Smyth," seal and send it to the post, than to write another letter enclosing it and have the packet delivered by hand to Miss Vanhomrigh. An examination of the letter (No. III) soon reveals the motive. It is a detailed answer, more detailed than it was his custom to write, to the letter from Miss Long, containing little or nothing beyond comment and rejoinder to her remarks. "Miss Hussy" is mentioned twice by Miss Long, and consequently in two places Swift also speaks of her. The first is of trivial importance, but the second, the last paragraph but one in the letter, is of great intrinsic interest, and explains why Swift chose this roundabout way of communicating with his correspondent. In this passage he seizes the occasion, afforded by one sentence in Miss Long's letter, to write a sketch of "Miss Hussy's" character and manners, which he plainly intends as much for Miss Hussy's enlightenment as for his acquaintance at King's Lynn. In fact, he here tells Vanessa, not obscurely, that her conduct towards himself is imprudent and should be amended. "Although," he writes between the lines, "I am twice your age, you should remember that you are

no longer a child but a full-grown young woman. And, though I may be your playmate, I am not your brother. You should not try to be constantly alone with me, or pretend that we have secrets between us. For your own sake and mine, behave yourself more like a grown-up person."

Here, then, is the first note of warning, the first indication, for us if not for those playthings of destiny, that their friendship was no ordinary one, but might lead them both into unimagined realms of experience. Swift thought that his hint would suffice to check Esther in what was only her unconscious imprudence; but the effect produced upon her by the move was evidently not the effect he desired, though his letter undoubtedly set her thinking. In any case she did not forward it to King's Lynn, nor, when a few days later she heard of Miss Long's death, did she return it to Swift, but retained it, together with the covering-letter. These two, as they are the first in date, so they may be considered to have been the nest-eggs of the Swift and Vanessa correspondence as we know it. Their preservation marks a distinct point—perhaps the first awakening of doubt—in the story of Vanessa; and since, from whatever motive, she kept them in her possession, she would be the more likely to add to them other letters from Swift, as well as copies of those letters from herself which

were written at critical times or for other reasons worthy of preservation.

During the early part of the next year Swift was a less frequent visitor at the Vanhomrighs' house. His time was largely taken up with business and politics, and the names which occur oftenest in his letters are those of courtiers and ministers and his own printer. Yet he sometimes dined or spent an evening with his friends, and speaks of these occasions with evident relief: "I dined with Mrs. Van, where I could be easy," he writes on March 30, being then on the eve of a painful sickness which kept him for some time in his own lodgings. From June he was living in Kensington (where, from an obscure allusion in one of his later letters, it is possible he was visited by the Vanhomrighs) until, some time before the end of July, he went to Windsor. At this point occurs the first series (Nos. IV-IX) of the famous Swift and Vanessa correspondence. Six letters have been preserved; but evidence, discussed at the end of Section II of this Introduction, is available to prove that the number which passed between them was not less than eleven. The difficulty of interpreting the correspondence except in the broadest sense is largely owing to its fragmentary state, and from now onwards it is necessary to move with extreme caution; for we are on ground whereon controversy has flourished in

print for a hundred and seventy years, and in words for two hundred—controversy which might have been more moderate in tone and more fruitful of result, if writers had always remembered that, though grounds of conjecture are abundant, the data for forming a judgment are manifestly incomplete. Taking care, then, to separate fact from supposition, let us see what the letters have to tell us.

First and most notably, Esther has decided to preserve Swift's letters, and endorses them with numbers, in order of date. She also keeps drafts of some of her own, and similarly numbers these. But not of all : for the first existing letter from her, numbered "1," is a complaint that she has not had an answer to a letter which she wrote after the receipt of Swift's second. It has sometimes been suggested that her resolve to preserve the letters was made, from the first, with the idea that they would prove useful documents in her pursuit of Swift. This view, which almost classes her as a blackmailer, certainly finds no support from this early group of letters. Swift, besides being a great friend, was a notable person ; and it would be strange indeed if she had been less careful of writings in his hand than the scores of acquaintance, high and lowly, who were already treasuring his letters. It is also quite natural that she should not have kept copies of her own with equal dili-

gence. The two which survive are not for a moment to be regarded as "useful documents" in the sense suggested. They are humorous compositions; which drew from her friend the compliment she was hoping for: "You raily well"; and she placed the copies beside his letters, in all probability because she thought them intrinsically worthy of preservation. Swift's first three letters are full of news, gossip and banter, with a caressing reference to the house in St. James's Street, from which it appears that Esther was already in the habit of trying to tyrannize over him, or in her own phrase "chiding and gaining by it." The last of this group (No. IX) is allusive and difficult, since a visit of the Vanhomrighs' to Windsor, and at least four lost letters had intervened between it and No. VIII. It has been sometimes misunderstood, for it seems in itself to contradict the story of Swift's going to Oxford with Esther, which has been founded on it.

The correspondence then breaks off. Swift returning to London and the necessity for letters thus removed. There is scanty evidence for the events of the next seven months. Swift was more than ever occupied with his political work and with making efforts to secure his own preferment. He dined daily with great folks, and not once, so far as we know, with Mrs. Van, though he occasionally spent an evening in her house. One letter of this

period (March, 1713) gives us a hint that the same company was still to be found assembled there, occupied with the same elaborate foolery; for Swift is asked to decide whether Sir Andrew Fountaine or Madam Hussy be the silliest, and replies that it would be hard to say, since one is so ripe-witted a young woman, and the other so profound and bookish.

Documents appear again when Swift, for the second time since making the Vanhomrighs' acquaintance, goes to Ireland, and on the eve of his departure writes a farewell letter which inaugurates the second series (X-XVI). From this little note, as well as from No. XV, it appears that he had undertaken to transact some legal business for Esther in Ireland. The next day he writes to her, from St. Albans, a letter which is now missing, and the day after to her sister from Dunstable, following up these with one to their mother from Chester. And, since we again touch on the subject of lost letters, where are Swift's letters to Mary Vanhomrigh? It is not likely that she destroyed them, or that after her death her sister did so, since the various reasons suggested for the destruction, either by Vanessa or her executors, of parts of her correspondence can hardly be held to apply to Mary's. If ever this is brought to light—and its appearance would not be much more strange than the recent discovery of the Vanessa correspondence



itself—it will probably prove more illuminating than anything else in the literary history of Vanessa since the publication of the letters in 1814. But to return to our text: Swift's letters, written at two stages of his journey, show no alteration in tone from those written at Windsor in the previous year. He writes to Mrs. Vanhomrigh in the easy style of an intimate friend, calling Hussy and Moll by their names and winding up with a playful sentence which might as easily have been addressed to either of her daughters as to herself. There is, in short, little to distinguish these from the dozens of letters which, at all times of his life, he wrote to women with whom he was friendly. But the same cannot be said of Esther's letters. In the three weeks covered by them the tone changes rapidly. Her first letter is sentimental and girlish: in the next, the accents of the spoiled child are distinctly audible, yet it shows her in a more serious vein. She makes a rather pathetic bid for his attention by writing of politics, and ends with a half-humorous appeal to him to "talk" to her. From the third it is evident that Swift had made her promise not to write too frequently, and that she, though fearful of offending him, is incapable of abiding by the promise. The last roundly complains of his cruelty and neglect, and contains her only written allusion, so far as we know, to Stella: "If you are very happy it is

ill-natured of you not to tell me so, except 'tis what is inconsistent with mine." This is the first intimation, in the letters, that she looked forward to marrying her elderly friend or claimed any special property in him. Immature as she plainly is, Miss Hussy is now grown into Vanessa, and "the poor girl," far more than eighteen months earlier, "has lost a good deal of her mirth." And precisely at this point her letters cease for a number of years. We shall hear from her twice in a year and a half's time; after that, with the possible exception of one playful letter written about five years later, we shall see no more of her writing till the painful series of letters written in 1720-2.

The last letter in the group at which we are now glancing is Swift's reply to the four from Vanessa, dated from Laracor. In this there is indeed a change of tone, but not the change desired by Vanessa. His answer to her fervid appeals is a reserve more significant than words: he can almost be seen shrivelling under her touch. His letter would have been accepted as final by any woman but Vanessa. Her letters are characterized as "splenetic"; no reply is vouchsafed to her questions about his health except that he is "something better"; her hint that he has perhaps found happiness with another is not noticed. "I told you," he writes, "when I left England, I would endeavour to forget everything there, and

would write as seldom as I could." In other words, Vanessa's friendship is just one of the pleasant things he left behind when going into exile to Ireland, and that is all. Swift remained in Ireland for another two months, and there is no evidence that any letters passed between him and Vanessa in that time. Therefore, since he had half-prophesied that he would be sent for again to England, it may well be that none were in fact written. It is not unlikely that Vanessa saw how weak a weapon is a letter against a correspondent who will leave the most vital parts unanswered, and resolved to wait her time and make in person the grand attempt to force Swift to accept her, no longer as a pupil but as a lover.

And now once more for eight months Swift was in England and near Vanessa. Letters therefore became unnecessary, and we have not a single dated document to tell us what happened. But it is probable that early in this period there occurred the last of the scenes which are generalized, if not worked into one, in *Cadenus and Vanessa*. There are difficulties connected with the dating of this poem. Although Swift himself said, at a later date, that it was written at Windsor in 1712,<sup>1</sup> it cannot have been finished at that time, since he was not then *decanus*. It is perhaps possible,

<sup>1</sup> Writing in 1726, his words are "at Windsor, near fourteen years ago."

since Swift was at Windsor in the autumn of this year (1713), that he may have written it then, and afterwards made a mistake of one year in counting back. And it is equally difficult to assign a date to the events related in the poem. The lines—

Vanessa, not in years a score,  
Dreams of a Gown of forty-four,

contain a neat antithesis and an easy rhyme, but do not help at all in the attempt to make arithmetic and poetry agree. Rather are they a hindrance, since Vanessa's years reached a score (as Swift thought, but actually a score and two) many months before he became forty-four. Even if we make a present of the first line to rhyme, compliment or rhetoric, and seek to fix the date by Swift's age alone, we can scarcely believe the couplet, for it would then tell us that the scene was enacted at some time between December, 1711, and November, 1712. Now it is impossible to believe that it had taken place before the Windsor letters, and difficult to believe it had preceded the letters of the Irish journey of 1713, notably Nos. X, XII and XV. The evidence is confusing, since the above-quoted couplet points to a non-existent date, and Swift's deliberate statement fourteen (or thirteen) years later involves an impossibility of another kind. While, therefore, refusing to dogmatize except about the

known facts of this story, where assumption has already clouded so much of the view, it seems on the whole better to trust to the evidence of the name Cadenus, and to the implicit evidence of the letters and, as a working hypothesis, to assign the main scene in *Cadenus and Vanessa* to the autumn of 1713. That is to say, that although on reflection, or by her own confession, it may have become clear that Vanessa had "dreamed" of the Doctor for a year or two, her declaration and the unspecified agreement following it belong to the later date.

Doubts have sometimes been expressed as to the veracity and biographical value of this poem. But although it is at first sight tempting to regard an eighteenth century piece, which for nearly half its length is occupied with the doings of gods and goddesses, as a conventional fabrication, there are weighty reasons against classing this work as such. In the first place, it was not written for publication, but for Vanessa alone: it was given to her, and no copies were made of it until after her death. In these circumstances it is almost impossible to believe that Swift would have done anything so unmeaning, so futile, as to write an account of the matter which was not strictly true. This chapter in Vanessa's story was, as he thought, closed, and to please her he was enshrining it in a poem, a private gift to her. The

effect of an untrue or even an unfair account of it is only too easily imaginable. Another proof of this poem's truth to life is found in the many parallels, sometimes almost amounting to quotation, between lines in the poem and passages in the correspondence, some of which are indicated in footnotes to the letters below. And lastly, the poem itself suggests inevitably by its structure that it is not only "founded on fact," but severely limited to fact. It is doubtful if Swift or any man of his age, setting out to invent a semi-mythological narrative, could have produced a perfectly finished poem with an unfinished plot. If we shut our eyes to biography and judge the piece as an example of the kind to which it would then seem to belong, the ending must be found indeterminate and unsatisfactory to a degree which largely diminishes from the interest of the whole work. And this judgment was in fact passed upon it, in the next age, by Goldsmith. "This is thought," he wrote, "to be one of Dr. Swift's correctest pieces. Its chief merit, indeed, is the elegant ease with which a story, but ill-conceived in itself, is told." All indications, then, are in favour of accepting lines 304 to 827 of *Cadenus and Vanessa* as authentic biographical material.

It is strange to us, who are in the habit of regarding our forefathers as better classicists than ourselves, to find that the expression "the conscious

muse " in the last line of the passage just indicated, provided a stumbling-block. Swift's early detractors interpreted it, without question, as meaning conscious of guilt, and his defenders found it necessary to labour the point against them. Yet perhaps this is a proof, not of the want of scholarship in the generation which came immediately after Swift's, but of the passion and prejudice with which they and many of their successors have approached the question of Swift's relations with women. But it is time to proceed, remembering that henceforth the letters are our only guide, and therefore, owing to the unreliable character of the writers of the seventeen-fifties and 'eighties—Orrery, Delany, Deane Swift, Monk Berkeley, Sheridan—any statement not proved by the letters is to be regarded as gossip, or at the best as late tradition.

Although the conscious muse has kept to herself a good many things we should like to know, her testimony has been invaluable. We pass to the next series of letters (XVII–XX) with the knowledge that Vanessa's passionate declaration is over; a settlement, in which she clearly acquiesces, has been arrived at; and that settlement was, equally clearly, more in accordance with Swift's wishes than with hers. Of these letters, exchanged while Swift was in retirement at Letcombe, we possess four out of the six written

by him and none by Vanessa, who sent at least four. The entire absence of her letters of this series may be conjecturally explained by supposing that, for reasons which readily suggest themselves, she did not keep copies of them. After the first letter, merely describing Swift's life and surroundings, one from each correspondent is missing; and Vanessa's seems to have related her encounter with a bailiff, for in his reply he mentions a "touch on the shoulder," and hastens to give her directions for raising money. Mrs. Vanhomrigh was now dead, and the daughters were left alone to face her creditors, and to shoulder the burdens of life. Mary was in delicate health, and was several years younger than Esther, who, as her mother's executrix and virtual head of the family, found herself in a position of loneliness and difficulty. She had then a particular need of Swift's help and advice, and he, eager to be her friend and helper, was perhaps at no time more disinclined to permit, either to himself or to Vanessa, any lover-like word or act. If only for the reason that she was an orphan and her "five thousand guineas" had become much more, he was bound to do all he could to prevent her from compromising her reputation, and to walk warily for his own sake.

After another gap, bridged originally by three letters, we have Swift's of August 1, the first



paragraph whereof, though allusive and unprecise in expression, is fairly obviously a refusal of Vanessa's request to be addressed as "Dear Esther," in letters. The last of the group shows that she had unexpectedly paid a visit to Letcombe and, either then or in a letter which we know she wrote after her return to London, spoken of her intention to go to Ireland to live. In short, it is plain that the agreement chronicled though not divulged in *Cadenus and Vanessa*, was, like treaties in more modern times, breaking down before it was a year old. Swift's letter of farewell speaks of his, "perfect esteem and friendship" in a phrase so sincere that it should have long ago silenced calumniators of a certain class, but yet contains enough of rebuke and dissuasion to make it plain that he was not to be moved to enlarge or alter the limits he had set to their friendship.

There is no evidence to support the statement of Orrery, that Esther and Mary Vanhomrigh left London because they could not otherwise avoid imprisonment for debt. The motive was no doubt that London, now that their mother was dead and Swift had gone away, held little attraction. Moreover, in Ireland they would be able to live on their own property and look into their law affairs, which, though they could wait indefinitely while Swift was in London, would, with

Swift in Dublin, appear to demand immediate attention. To Ireland, at any rate, they came in the autumn of this year (1714); and Esther, finding that Swift was away on a journey, sent a servant after him with a letter (now lost) asking him to come back at once, and visit her at their house in Celbridge. His reply is the first of the fourth series of letters (XXI–XXVIII). This series extends over four and a half years, the least documented and the most mysterious of the fifteen or sixteen with which we are concerned. From early in November to the end of this year there are letters—two full of impatience and passionate complaint from Vanessa, and two or three brief notes from Swift, excusing himself for not seeing her more often. After these comes a letter, possibly belonging to the following year, which shows that they were still in the habit of meeting in Dublin, though how frequently cannot be guessed, and then silence for three or four years.

We are now arrived at that point where an early biographer quaintly remarks, “there is a chasm in the Dean’s life,” by which he means that there is nothing of public importance to chronicle at this time. This chasm has been filled to overflowing by gossip, which has here inserted Swift’s marriage to Stella, performed by a bishop, without witnesses, “in the garden.” It is outside our

province to review the controversy connected with this supposed event. But since if it were proved or probable it would materially affect our estimate of the relations between Swift and Vanessa, it is necessary to state that the marriage has never been proved, and that no respectable evidence has ever been produced in support of it. The document recently printed by Dr. Bernard<sup>1</sup> is suspect, for reasons to be discussed later. It is about this time, too, that Vanessa is said to have received two offers of marriage, one at least, that from Dr. Winter, with the approval of Swift. There is nothing inherently improbable in this story, but the authority is not good enough for us to accept it as fact. If it were true, it might afford an explanation of the breach, if breach there was, between Swift and her in the next few years. But to explain a hypothetical situation by an unproved circumstance would lead us too far from our pursuit after fact. It is perhaps allowable to assume that if Swift had tried to marry Vanessa to some one else, her resentment would have been strong enough to cause her to break off all relations with him. But our only evidence would seem to suggest that no such breach did in fact occur between them. For if their friendship had ceased for a number of years, and was then, on whatever

<sup>1</sup> In *Blackwood's Magazine*, November, 1906. See also Swift's *Prose Works*, ed. Temple-Scott, xii, 94-5.

terms and on whatever conditions, renewed, the first letter after the reconciliation would surely have been marked "1," as initiating a new series. But when Swift at last wrote again in May, 1719, Vanessa marked his letter "8," which almost amounts to a proof that she regarded the correspondence of all these years as that of one period. It is perhaps most probable that the 1714 letters preceded a critical scene, which resulted in a stricter agreement than that previously entered into, whereby visits were regulated and letters disallowed.

But it is unprofitable to theorize further, with no facts to support us. Certain it is that the correspondence was renewed by Vanessa, in a letter (now lost) written in French; and Swift replied in the same language with a letter couched in such terms that it is surprising that commentators have not married him, secretly of course, to Vanessa instead of (or as well as) to Stella. It is of no avail to call this a literary exercise in a foreign tongue, or to say that the exaggerated compliments were modelled on a similar set in Vanessa's letter. Swift is here in earnest. The qualities referred to in such glowing terms are precisely those for which he had always admired her. The note of passion is nowhere to be detected; but the expressions of admiration are only exceeded by those of which Cadenus had been the unwilling

recipient seven years previously. It would seem—to conclude our remarks on this dubious period with yet another conjecture—that he thought Vanessa had now outgrown her “imagination,” and could be trusted to receive with equanimity the praises which, when not occupied in rallying their spelling or ridiculing their pretensions, he was accustomed to bestow on his women friends. This view finds some support in the next two letters, which perhaps belong to this date, where Vanessa, with tragic irony appropriate to this fourth act, humorously assumes the language of passion and desperation, and Swift writes back commending her performance.

The first letter of the next series is missing; and in its absence we cannot see, as we can in all former cases, what event marked in Vanessa’s mind the end of one period and the beginning of another. Indeed, her endorsements cease to be of any help from this time, and soon come to an end. For us there is no reason to divide the rest of the correspondence, or the rest of Vanessa’s life, into sections. We have reached the final chapter, which in the popular mind has usurped the place of the whole story, and is so well known that we need hardly dwell upon it except to point out, as before, the distinction between proven and unproven statements. We may note in passing that only in these last years are the

names "Cadenus" and "Vanessa" used in the correspondence.

Swift leads off with verses, compliment and raillery, and receives a querulous reply, which causes him to expostulate, though gently. In this letter he invents the use of the "strokes" which figure so largely in Vanessa's writing henceforward; and this simple device seems to restore her good humour: "I will never quarrel again, if I can help it." Three months later comes a letter from Swift complaining of dullness and "spleen," and cautioning Vanessa against giving way to the same afflictions; and some time between mid-October and the end of the year, Vanessa writes three letters, progressively passionate, beside which hyperbole dwindles to reticence. To the early spring belongs a letter which tells us that poor Molkin, whose health had been for some years a cause of great anxiety both to her sister and to Swift, is dead, and Vanessa has now but one reason to live. For the rest of the year we have only one letter, wherein Swift, absurdly but obviously in good faith, recommends exercise and diversion as the best cure for Vanessa's melancholy and, with a blindness which only our knowledge of his intense sincerity enables us to credit, longs for the impossible—a return to the old days and the enjoyment of the pleasantest intercourse, the warmest friendship, the most

placid affection that may exist between mortals: His tone is still the same twelve months later, when the last letters were exchanged. His are full of sound, worldly advice, affectionate and regretful references to old times, and of passages showing how much he delighted, now as always, in Vanessa's society. Hers evince more calm than those written eighteen months before, but it is not the calm of resignation: "The more I think, the more unhappy I am."

In less than a year she was dead. According to the only early writer who gives any details, she fell into a consumption (which was probably the disease which killed her sister), and was at last carried off by a fever. By a broken heart! exclaims the multitude, who may be right. In either event her early death was in all likelihood a release from pain, since, having aimed at one happiness and missed it, she could find no other.

Thus much we know, and to it we may safely add, that before her death there had been a breach between her and Swift, because he is not mentioned in her will among those to whom she leaves twenty-five pounds to buy a ring. But gossip must needs have the last word, and add a melodramatic ending. It has accordingly been related that Vanessa wrote to Swift (or to Stella), asking if it was true that they were married; that Swift thereupon galloped to Celbridge and in

silence threw her letter on the table, and returned to his horse; that Vanessa then revoked a will she had made in favour of Swift, and made another, ordered the publication of *Cadenus and Vanessa* and her correspondence with Swift, and died. On this we may remark that the beginning of the story is told in two ways, which at once weakens its credit; that the middle part attributes to Swift a brutal action to which it is hard to believe he could have been roused by the indiscreet question of a young woman whom he, in his sense of the word, loved; and that the ending is extremely improbable. For we know enough of these two to state that if Vanessa had made a will in the days when they were friends, she would certainly have consulted Swift about it; and can it be thought that his advice to her would have differed from his advice to Stella in the same circumstances? It is quite likely that Vanessa heard rumours of the marriage, and that before her death she said things calculated to give a fresh fillip to the scandal which, without her active help, would receive congenial nourishment by her death.

It was eagerly caught up by Bishop Evans,<sup>1</sup> a personal and political enemy of Swift, who had publicly rebuked him for insolence to an obscure clergyman, defied his episcopal authority so far

<sup>1</sup> See J. H. Bernard, *loc. cit.*



as he legally could, and twice at least soundly trounced him in letters. This ill-wisher who, as Swift had said, united in his own person the hasty passions of his countrymen with "the long, sedate resentment of a Spaniard," wrote off to Archbishop Wake, giving an account of Vanessa's death, with the gossips' embellishments, adding that "they give out" there was a promise of marriage between her and Swift, who yet was married—this he states as fact—to "Mrs. Johnson, a natural daughter of Sir W. Temple," and that Vanessa was "a pretended vain wit," who "lived without God in the world." He goes on to hint, not obscurely, that the Archbishop should take steps to punish Swift and his partisans, and concludes: "I am, not under the power of any pique, or resentment, but have only the public good . . . at heart." If this is evidence, then the search for fact is wasted labour. The letter has only been noticed because it is earlier, by nearly thirty years, than the *Remarks* of Orrery, the next tattler. An undefinable portion of the unproven statements about Stella and Vanessa may be true, but they all have the same two weaknesses: their source is suspect, and they are such statements as were bound to be made, in the circumstances, by the babblers who cannot rest so long as there is a mystery to be explained. It would, then, be superstitious to accept any of them as truth.

But after our review of the facts, what is the verdict? It is impossible not to pity Vanessa and easy to blame Swift. Yet the amount of blame allotted to him must depend on our view of the relations existing between them, on our answer to the questions, How did they love? and Why did they not marry?

Several explanations which have been offered, one more elegant than another, may be dismissed with a bare mention. Among these are that Swift purposely played with Vanessa till she was emotionally demoralized and then cast her off; that Swift was impotent; that Vanessa was a drunkard; that carnal intercourse took place between them. A more reasonable view (founded, however, on the supposition of the marriage to Stella) is that Swift fell violently in love with Vanessa, and though unable to marry her could not force himself to part with her. But this view is very difficult to accept, for it belies his two salient qualities of strength and sincerity. His letters to Vanessa have often been styled ambiguous, and so they are, to us. But to Vanessa they were allusive, not ambiguous. She had written and read letters which we have not seen; and the passages in Swift's letters referring to these, and the greater number of passages which allude to their conversations and daily habits, were as clear as daylight to her. His simple

device of sending messages, in the third person, from "Cadenus" could only deceive the merest stranger, and only for the reading of one letter. And this is precisely the use for which it was intended. He was always apprehensive that his letters would be opened in the post, as they actually were in 1715; and many little touches in his correspondence, which now seem both foolishly and vainly secretive, were added for the eye of any prying stranger who might search his private letters for treasonable (i.e., anti-Whig) sentiments. The supposition that he tried to stifle his love for Vanessa and to hide it from her does not accord with our knowledge of his character. The truth to life, which must here be our substitute for ascertained fact, is that he was very fond of her, more than of any other woman except Stella, but never in his life a lover in the passionate sense.

Although many of Swift's letters seem to reveal him as a man temperamentally young, he looked upon himself, from early middle life, as old. Recurrent attacks, increasingly prolonged and frequent, of a painful and threatening disease, were in great part the cause of this feeling; and political disappointments, culminating in his banishment to Ireland, finally robbed him of zest and hope. Disgusted with the present and dreading the future, he could only dwell with

pleasure on bygone days. He was grown "monkish and splenetic." The tragedy, then, was inevitable from the day when Vanessa attempted to arouse in him a love of which he was incapable. It might have been hastened, or its form might have been different, if he had sternly broken with Vanessa as soon as he had discovered the nature of her desires; but it could not have been averted. Age and youth, age terribly strong and youth pitifully weak, age experienced and affectionate but youth passionate and uncompromising, these could not live together; but one, no need to ask which, must die.

## II

It would be interesting to trace the history of the manuscripts of this correspondence, which have been secretly treasured for nearly two hundred years; but this task must be left for some one with better opportunities for investigation than the present writer. The first step would be achieved by identifying the handwriting on the first leaf in the volume, which a search among likely contemporary manuscripts in the British Museum has failed to accomplish. The libraries or the Record Office of Dublin would probably yield up the secret.

We are told by Sheridan (1784) that not long after Vanessa's death the manuscripts were "put

to the press, and some progress made in the letters, when Dr. Sheridan [the writer's father]; getting intelligence of it . . . applied so effectually to the executors, that the printed copy was cancelled, but the originals still remained in their hands." Delany (1754) says that George Berkeley perused the letters and found in them "nothing that would either do honour to [Vanessa's] character, or bring the least reflection on Cadenus"; while in *Literary Relics* (1789) he is said to have "withheld them from the press." From these statements it has sometimes been concluded that Berkeley destroyed them. Now, if they were ever in Berkeley's possession, it is not out of place to note that his study, containing Vanhomrigh documents, was broken into during his absence in England,<sup>1</sup> though as this was done under the supervision of his friend, Thomas Prior, it is unlikely that any papers were stolen on that occasion. But it seems more probable that the manuscripts were from the first in the keeping of Robert Marshall. Swift, writing to Thomas Tickel in July, 1726, speaks of *Cadenus and Vanessa*, then on the eve of publication, as a "thing . . . which no friend would publish." Obviously, then, this poem was given to the world not by Berkeley, with whom Swift was on friendly terms, but by Marshall, who was certainly

<sup>1</sup> Berkeley's letter to Prior, January 20, 1725-6.

a complete stranger to Berkeley<sup>1</sup> and probably to Swift; and if he possessed *Cadenus and Vanessa* it is a fairly safe inference that the letters were also in his hands. Moreover, we are told that the arrested publication of the letters was begun in the absence of Swift, which may mean in the summer of 1726, when he was in England. If this be so, the design evidently was to publish the letters and *Cadenus and Vanessa* together.

There is one more question which the reader is entitled to ask, but at present can receive no certain answer: How is the fragmentary state of this correspondence to be accounted for? That Vanessa's part in it should be incomplete is no cause for wonder, since it is easy to imagine that she would not be at the pains of keeping drafts of all her letters. But there are indications that she made and laid by a greater number than those now forthcoming. The fact, for instance, that her two letters of 1714 are numbered "4" and "6" is almost a proof that there were originally four more copies belonging to this series. With regard to Swift's letters the case is different, for no trouble was involved in preserving them beyond the opening and closing of a drawer. It is highly improbable that Vanessa herself destroyed a part of the correspondence. Whether it be true or untrue that she directed her executors

<sup>1</sup> Berkeley's letter to Prior, January 27, 1725-6,

to publish it makes very little difference in this connexion, for she bequeathed all her effects to two strangers, thus making a present of the letters to immediate posterity. It was her wish, then, that the world should know what had passed between Swift and herself; and seeing what now remains of their correspondence, letters in every mood from frigid to fervid, from trivial notes to soul-revealing effusions, it is hard to believe that she selected these for preservation and suppressed the rest.

The same considerations make it difficult to suppose that the actual state of the correspondence is owing to selection by either of her executors. If Berkeley had destroyed a part of it, his object would have been to protect the reputations of the dead woman and his living friend; and in this case he would surely have destroyed a number of the most easily misunderstood of those now remaining. We do not know enough about Marshall to speak dogmatically in his case; but whether from malice, to which Swift net unnaturally ascribed his action in publishing *Calenus and Vanessa*, or from greed, which we may gather from Berkeley's letters about their joint executorship, was his ruling principle, his interest would seem to have been to preserve the correspondence in as complete a state as possible. That any subsequent owner of the manuscript, any collector,

was careless of it and parted with a large number of letters, scattered up and down between the beginning and the end, is also extremely unlikely. It is perhaps, on the whole, most probable that the present incomplete state of the collection is the result of hurried pilfering, committed at a time when the letters were not bound together or chronologically arranged. The missing letters may well be still in existence.

The manuscript was, at some period of its history, handsomely bound in brown calf. The front cover of the volume, now mounted inside the cover of the new British Museum binding, had in the centre a coat of arms, which, however, has been so far erased that the indentation of the deeper lines and a few specks of gold near the margin are all that remain; so that the only tale told by this once valuable clue is, that some possessor of the volume was particular to cover up the traces of his own or some one else's ownership. The home of the manuscript some thirty years ago is perhaps indicated by an envelope, which was found among the leaves when the book was acquired by the nation, postmarked "Ja; 2; 92," and addressed to "Miss Leslie, Glaslough, C. Monaghan, Ireland." This is now mounted and placed before folio 1. More recently this volume formed part of the Morrison collection, and was secured for the British Museum at



Sotheby's sale on the 6th of May, 1919. It now constitutes Additional MS. 39839.

On the first leaf is the following inscription, in a hand which probably belongs to the middle of the eighteenth century :

Original Letters of Dr. Jonathan Swift Dean of St. Patrick's. Dublin. to Mrs. Van Homrigh celebrated by him in his published Works under the name of Vanessa.

With the foul copies of her Letters & Answers, in her own hand Writing !

The writer of this legend, whom for want of identification we may call the first collector, has added endorsements on the cover of nearly all of Swift's letters. These, like his eloquent exclamation mark on the front page, testify to the value he set upon the collection, but do not show much independent knowledge of the subject. In most cases they merely repeat the date given in the letter, or remark the absence of date. In the endorsement of No. XVII he reproduces, without comment, Swift's slip of 1713 for 1714 ; in that of No. III he inaccurately writes " Dec. 8th " for " Dec. 18th " ; No. XXXI is not endorsed. On the other hand, in endorsing No. X he expands Swift's " Mr. B's. House " into " Mr. Barber's (since Aldn. Barber's) House," and to the endorsements of four others he has added letters, of which it is difficult to discover the meaning—thus No. XXXIII is marked " B." ; No. XXV,

“E.E.”; No. XLIII, “E.”; No. XLIV, “E.E.E.”

At a considerably later date the letters were numbered, on the inside, in red ink. This numbering seems to be the outcome of quite superficial guess-work: it does not accord with internal evidence, nor does it follow the order of printing adopted by Scott and his successors. It is perhaps a coincidence that No. XXXI, which is not endorsed by the first collector, is also omitted from the red-ink numeration.

Before No. XVII is inserted a leaf on which is written, in a nineteenth-century hand, a note pointing out at length the reasons for holding that the letter is wrongly dated 1713, and should be placed first among the letters of 1714.

But there is another set of endorsements, often faint and in every case unobtrusive, in the corner of the cover of all the letters, except two, from the beginning of 1712 to almost the end of 1720. These are in Vanessa's hand, yet they do not seem to have been noticed by the early transcribers. The first collector has even disregarded them to the extent of writing his uninformative remarks over them in one or two cases. They are, it need hardly be said, of extreme value, not only in showing the care with which, in the earlier years, Vanessa docketed and filed the correspondence, but in affording evidence of the number of letters

originally belonging to each period and in helping us to assign an approximate date to undated letters. Their usefulness has, it is hoped, been sufficiently demonstrated in the first section of this Introduction.

The first letter in our manuscript volume is from Swift to Sir Andrew Fountaine. This has no connexion with the story of Vanessa, and has, therefore, been banished to a place among the miscellaneous letters of Swift at the end of the book. Our No. I, on the other hand, is not in the manuscript, but is copied from Deane Swift's edition of Swift's letters. It is inserted here because without it No. III, written in answer to it, is only partly intelligible. This group of three letters forms the prologue to the main body of the correspondence. With the exception of the first, all the letters here printed in Part I are from the manuscript, Nos. II-XXI in the same order, and Nos. XXII-XLVIII with the order a good deal altered. The chief reason for changing the arrangement is that several undated letters, which are placed at the end in the manuscript, have, after careful study of all the available evidence, been assigned to approximate dates elsewhere. In all such cases the reasons for the arrangement adopted are given in a footnote.

This new edition of the Swift and Vanessa letters offers to the reader an accurate text (which

will be found to differ considerably from the printed versions), two unpublished letters (Nos. III and XXXII), besides a little note (XLII) and a postscript (XVII), and a fresh study of the whole correspondence, chiefly in the light of Vanessa's endorsements.

\* \* \* \* \*

The following table displays the Swift and Vanessa correspondence as we possess it, and records all certain indications of the existence, at one time, of letters now missing from it. It shows the number of letters written by each party, how many are dated or can safely be dated, how many bear Vanessa's endorsement, and to what extent the letters answer each other. Thus, a letter from Vanessa answering one from Swift is placed in the same line: a letter from Swift answering one from Vanessa is in the following line. It will also be observed that Vanessa, as long as she kept up her system of endorsements, divided the correspondence into periods, so that the letters are grouped into half a dozen numerical series, each beginning at 1, and rising, in one instance, to 8. These series of endorsements are in all cases broken, and the gaps in the numbering afford one means of finding out how far from complete is the correspondence as it has come down to us. Another means is provided by the letters themselves, since it frequently happens

that a letter from one party is demonstrably an answer to a letter which we do not now possess ; and in this way a number of lost letters, whose existence is not proved by gaps in the endorsement numbers, can be shown to have been exchanged. Lost letters, which can be shown by this means to have existed, are indicated by an asterisk in the table. Putting together the two kinds of evidence, we are able to state with confidence that while thirty-three letters are preserved between 1st August, 1712, and 15th October, 1720, eleven of Swift's and ten of Vanessa's in that period are missing. If Vanessa had been as careful to endorse her own drafts as she was to endorse Swift's letters, we should probably be able to point to a still greater number of lost letters on her side. For it is a fairly safe assumption that she wrote at least as many letters as Swift. The two and a half years between October, 1720, and Vanessa's death are represented by only five letters from her and six from Swift, and this part of the correspondence is not sufficiently frequent or closely knit to enable us to speculate profitably as to the number of letters it originally contained. With regard to the whole period—ten years and a week—covered by the seven groups of letters here presented, it would be rash to assume that we now have more than half the original number which were exchanged.

## TABLE OF LETTERS

1712-1722

FROM SWIFT.			FROM VANESSA.		
No.	Endorsed.		No.	Endorsed.	
1. IV	[1 Aug., 1712]	1			
V	15 Aug., 1712	2			
			VI	1 Sept., 1712	1
VIII	3 Sept., 1712	3	VII	2 Sept., 1712	2
IX	[28 Sept., 1712]	7			
2. X	[31 May, 1713]	1			
	*		XI	6 June, 1713	1
XII	(6 June, 1713) <sup>1</sup>		XIII	23 June, 1713	2
			XIV	June, 1713	3
XVI	8 July, 1713	3	XV	June, 1713	4
3. XVII	8 June, 1714	1		*	
XVIII	8 July, 1714	3		*	
				*	
XIX	1 Aug., 1714	5		*	
XX	12 Aug., 1714	6			
4.					
XXI	5 Nov., 1714	1			
XXII		3			
XXIII		4	XXIV	1714	4
XXV		6	XXVI	1714	6
XXVII	[? 1715-16]	7			
XXVIII	12 May, 1719	8			
5.			XXIX		
XXX		3(?)			
6. XXXI	[13 July, 1720]	2	XXXII	[27 July] 1720	
XXXIII	4 Aug. [1720]	3	XXXIV	1720	
XXXV	12 Aug., 1720	4	XXXVI	1720	
XXXVII	15 Oct., 1720	5			

<sup>1</sup> To Mrs. Vanhomrigh.

7.		XXXVIII	1720	1
		XXXIX	1720	
		XL	1720	
	XLI			
	XLII	1 June [1741]		
	XLIII	5 July, 1721		
	XLIV	1 June, 1722	XLV	
	XLVI	13 July, 1722	XLVII	
	XLVIII	7 Aug., 1722		

## III

Of the Miscellaneous Letters in Part III, No. ii is from the Vanessa manuscript, as explained above. The rest are from Additional MS. 38671, acquired by the British Museum in 1913. This manuscript contains one letter (No. vii, addressed to Robert Percival) which has been previously printed, and nine hitherto unpublished. These are now printed in full with a few notes, which have been made as short and as unobtrusive as possible, and aim principally at indicating the connexion between these new letters and the bulk of Swift's correspondence. For this purpose reference is constantly made to the edition by Dr. Elrington Ball, cited throughout this volume as *Correspondence*.

The first letter affords us an entertaining glance at the business of intrigue, wherein Swift was becoming perfect through practice, and is especially interesting for the direct mention of a bribe. It is addressed to an unnamed correspondent, the cover being missing, but contains so many clues

to his identity that it is possible to name him with what almost amounts to certainty. We see first of all that Swift did not know his address at the time of writing; next, that Swift was recommending him for a post under Harry Temple (afterwards Lord Palmerston), and that he knew the Percivals; while it is also evident that he was a confidential if not an intimate friend of Swift. Good fortune enables us to follow all these clues to the person of Thomas Staunton. In the two short notes addressed to him (iv and v) he is called "Dear Tom"—a mode of address which Swift only used to two or three other people—and one of them shows that he was acting as legal agent to the younger Percival. Moreover, Staunton held for some time a post under Palmerston, from which he retired (according to Palmerston), or was dismissed (according to Swift), at some date prior to 1726 (see *Correspondence*, iii, 297–302). But perhaps the most conclusive evidence is to be found in connexion with Swift's ignorance of his correspondent's address. The letter was written on the day when Swift posted his fifteenth *Journal* to Stella; and at the end of this he asked her to call at a certain house and inquire whether a letter to Mr. Staunton from himself has been received and forwarded.

No. ii, from Vanessa's collection, bears no date, but can be dated exactly from the *Journal* to



*Stella.* The abrupt beginning shows it to be the reply to a letter of excuse sent by Sir Andrew Fountaine.

No. iii, though of slight interest in itself, takes its place among the letters concerning gifts from eminent people to Swift—one of the most pleasing sections of his correspondence. No. iv is only a few lines about some business unspecified, and the single fact which it adds to our knowledge is that Proudfoot's christian name was Robert. No. v is important, since it discloses Staunton's relations with Percival, and is of considerable personal interest. No. vi—almost as welcome an addition to Swift's correspondence as No. i—is an amusing prelude to the famous letter to Percival (No. vii), written some three weeks later. This has long been known to readers of Swift, but is here reprinted because there are a score of discrepancies between the published version and the original. No. viii is a mere note, apparently concerning one of Swift's investments or loans. No. ix is a fragment. The body of the letter consisted of ten lines, but about two-fifths of the first nine has been torn away and there are rents and holes in the portion which remains. Nevertheless, it can be interpreted to a great extent by reference to the published correspondence. It is the letter enclosing one of the same date from Swift and Sheridan to Mrs. Whiteway. At the

end of this Swift says: "Mr. Rochfort is my franker," and, referring to it in his next letter says: "I enclosed it in a cover to Mr. Rochfort, in which I desired he would send it to your house." Nos. x and xi introduce the familiar theme of Dr. Thomas Sheridan's debts and credits.

With the exception of those to Robert Percival, all the letters in this manuscript are addressed to people who have hitherto not been known as correspondents of Swift. Their preservation together is ultimately to be explained by the relations of Thomas Staunton with the others. For he was Swift's lawyer as well as Percival's, and he was related by marriage to the Rochforts, to whom no doubt he gave or bequeathed the letters addressed to himself and Percival. The rest of the manuscript is taken up with Rochfort material, except for one folio immediately following the Swift letters. This consists of a small scrap of paper, containing notes in a minute hand (not Swift's) relating to his money affairs and glebes. From the nature of some of the headings it may be gathered that the notes refer to, the time, during the last few years of his life, when his affairs had to be administered by others.

#### IV

In transcribing the autographs for this edition I have expanded all abbreviations which are now

obsolete or unusual, such as “h sd” for “he said,” normalized the use of capital letters and made such small changes as “£5” for the “5ll” of the originals. The writers’ punctuation has also been extensively altered, Vanessa’s for reasons which will be apparent in the next few pages, and Swift’s chiefly owing to his fondness for a colon followed by a capital letter. These substitutions can only add to the reader’s comfort, while they do not materially falsify the evidence. A more difficult question to decide was, how to act with regard to the spelling of the MSS. To alter Swift’s orthography is in one sense an impertinence, and often results in covering up the traces of his pronunciation and of his implied thoughts about the language. Moreover, he paid great attention to spelling, and was a good speller of his time. He had, however, two favourite spellings which were not in accordance with the standard of his generation. These are indicated in a letter from Charles Ford (6th July, 1714), referring to *Free Thoughts on the Present State of Affairs*, then in the press. “I took care,” he writes to Swift, “to blot the e’s out of on(c)ly and the a’s out of sche(a)me, which I suppose is the meaning of your question whether I corrected it.”

If this had been a book of mainly antiquarian interest I should have felt bound to reproduce the originals as exactly as can be done in print.

But since its interest is that of a perennial theme, it seemed that the arguments in favour of a literal transcript were beaten by those for producing a text which should not constantly pull the reader up with strange and even difficult forms of words. I have, therefore, normalized the spelling in the whole of the Swift and Vanessa correspondence; while the Miscellaneous Letters in Part III are printed in the spelling of the manuscripts. But there are a number of cases in which I have preserved an unusual form in the texts of Part I. "Railly," for instance, is not the same word as "rally," and Vanessa's antiquated "then" for "than" is interesting. "Ubsarve" and "good neeture" are evidently nursery words. There was probably some important pun underlying Swift's frequent use of "Malkin" for "Molkin"; and "spleenatick" seems to be a deliberate variant.

Finally, since this is the first edition of Vanessa's writing from her manuscript, some unedited specimens of her style will perhaps be welcomed. Letter XXXII (hitherto unpublished) has therefore been reproduced in facsimile, and I here add an exact transcript of Letter XXIX, which is a fair example of her spelling, as of her use and neglect of punctuation. Passages cancelled by her are here put between square brackets, and are followed immediately by the passages which she substituted. It should be remembered, in this

connexion and for other reasons, that these are Vanessa's drafts or "foul copies." The letters received by Swift may, therefore, have been less illiterate in appearance. We know in one instance (No. XXXII) that her fair copy included a date, which is lacking in the draft.

Is it possible. that again, you will do, the very same thing I warned you of so lately. I believe you thought I only rallied when I told you the other night that I wou'd pester you with letters. did not I know you very well I should think you knew but little of the world, to imagine that a woman would not keep her word when ever she pomised any thing that was malicious. had not you better a thousand times, throw away one hour, at some time or other of the day. then to be interrupted in your bussiness at this rate for I know t'is as impossible for you to burn my letters, without reading them. as t'is for me to avoid reproving you when you behave your self so wrong. once more I advise you [for your own] if you have any regard for your quiete to allter your behaviour quickly for I do assure you I have to much spirrite to sitt down contented with [a lose of this sorte] this treatment now becauss j love frankness extreamly j here tell you that I have determined [with my self] to try all maner of humain artes to reclaime you and if all those

'fail j am resolved to have recorse to the black one which [the 'say] is said never dos now see what Inconveainences you will bring both me and yourself into pay think calmely of it [had not you better] is it not much better to come of your self then to be brough by force & that perhaps at a time when you have the most agreaible ingagement in the world for when I undertake any thing I dont love to do it behalves

but there is one thing [which] falls out very ruckiley for you which is that of all the passions revenge hurries me least so that you have it yet in your power to turne all this furry into good humer. [and depend upon it] and depend upon it [come att what] and more I assure you come at what time you pleas you [shall] can never fail of being very well received



THE CORRESPONDENCE OF  
SWIFT AND VANESSA





# I

*Miss Anne Long to Swift.*

*November 18th, 1711.*

**I**F you will again allow me the pleasure of hearing from you, without murmuring I will let you enjoy that of laughing at me for any foolish word I misapply. For I know you are too reasonable to expect me to be nicely right in the matter. But then, when you take a fancy to be angry, pray let me know it quietly, that I may clear my meanings, which are always far from offending my friends, however unhappy I may be in my expressions. Could I expect you to remember any part of my letters so long ago, I would ask you that you should know where to find me when you had a mind to it. But I suppose you were in a romantic strain, and designed to have surprised me talking to myself in a wood or by the sea. Forgive the dullness of my apprehension, and if telling you that I am not Lynn will not do, I will print it, however inconvenient it may yet be to me—for I am not the better for the old lady's<sup>1</sup> death, but am put in hopes of being easy at Christmas ; however, I shall still continue to be

<sup>1</sup> Her grandmother.

Mrs. Smyth, near St. Nicholas' Church, in the town aforesaid.

So much for my affairs. Now as to my health, that was much out of order last summer. My distemper was a dropsy or asthma (you know what I mean, but I cannot spell it right) or both, lazy distempers, which I was too lazy to molest whilst they would let me sit in quiet ; but when they grew so unreasonable as not to let me do that, I applied myself to Doctor Inglis, by whose advice I am now well enough.

To give you the best account I can of this place, the ladies will make any returns, if one may believe what they say of one another. The men I know little of, for I am here what you have often upbraided me with, a Prude in everything but censuring my neighbours. A couple of divines, two aldermen and a custom-house officer are all my men acquaintance. The gay part of the town I know nothing of, and although for the honour of the place I will suppose there are good poets, yet that I never inquired after. I have a shelf pretty well filled at home, but want a Miscellany Mr. Steele put out last year : Miss Hussy<sup>1</sup> promised it me but has forgot it. I fancy you have interest enough with him to get it for me. I wish too, at your leisure, you would make a pedigree for me. The people here want sadly to know what I am. I

<sup>1</sup> Hester, or Esther Vanhomrigh, Vanessa.

pretend to no more than being of George Smyth's family of Nitly, but do not talk much of it, for fear of betraying myself; so they fancy some mystery to be in the matter, and would give their rival's place to be satisfied. At first they thought I came hither to make my fortune, by catching up some of their young fellows; but having avoided that sort of company I am still a riddle they know not what to make of. Many of them seem to love me well enough; for I hear all they say of one another without making mischief among them, and give them tea and coffee when I have it, which are the greatest charms I can boast of. The fine lady I have left to Moll<sup>1</sup> (who I suppose was at the Bath) or any other that will take it up. For I am grown a good housewife; I can pot and pickle, sir, and handle a needle very prettily. See Miss Hussy's scarf—I think that is improving mightily. If Miss Hussy keeps company with the eldest Hatton and is still a politician, she is not the girl I took her for; but to me she seems melancholy.

Sure Mr. St. John is not so altered but he will make returns. But how can I pretend to judge of anything, when my poor cousin is taken for an hermaphrodite—a thing I as little suspected her

<sup>1</sup> Mary Vanhomrigh, Vanessa's younger sister.



seen, after you have sealed that to Mrs. L[ong]. See what art people must use, though they mean ever so well. Now are you and Puppy lying at your ease, without dreaming anything of all this. Adieu till we meet over a pot of coffee or an orange and sugar in the Sluttery, which I have so often found to be the most agreeable chamber in the world.

## III

*Swift to Miss Anne Long.*

*Addressed :* To Mrs. Long.

London, *December 18th, 1711.*

Madam,

There is nothing I take kinder than reproaches of unkindness from those I value, and yet there is nothing I would willingly less deserve. I do not remember you ever misapplied a word at all, much less out of ignorance, which is not one of your faults. I was sensible I began to grow a dull correspondent, as all busy people are. I passed a scurvy summer between Court and country and sickness, and never found myself in a humour to say anything that you would take the pains to read.

I remember you promised to let me know where you are, but you never actually did so till your

last,<sup>1</sup> which I am now answering. All your letters are in my Cabinet (I mean a Box but the word is not so genteel),<sup>2</sup> and I remember them better than you; neither is there any need for your printing the place's name where you are; your pen makes a much more lasting impression, though you lean softer on it than any one I know. And after all I take it to be a Gasconnade, for I dare be hanged if ever there was a printer at Lynn; I fear not so much as a printer of calicoes. What can old ladies be good for, if we are neither the better for their lives, nor their deaths? You are put in hopes of being easy at Christmas. I shall be heartily glad to see it. But see how perverse you are, for that is just the time that I am in fear of being miserable. Your brethren the Whigs are endeavouring to make another change at Court; and we who stand for the present Ministry are under all imaginable apprehensions. In a very short time the matter will be decided, either to the ruin of all my friends at Court or to that of their adversaries. But I shall not enlarge upon politics, nor would have said so much if my own

<sup>1</sup> Letter I (above), which has been printed already; but this answer of Swift's is now published for the first time.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly the poems and epigrams printed by Curll in 1718 are stated to have been "found in the cabinet of . . . Mrs. Anne Long." See the "Decree for Concluding the Treaty," etc. (Part II, below).

interests were not so deeply involved in the good or ill event. Your illness is the effect of too little exercise. I fence against the same distemper you complain of by perpetually walking when the weather will permit me. You must not eat suppers, nor drink at all at night; nor swill small beer. Pray be my patient; for health is worth preserving, though life is not.<sup>1</sup>

I approve of your male acquaintance, only you want the dancing-master. I suppose the Custom-house Officer is a genteeler name for the Exciseman. Censure is the growth of all little towns, and I dare say the ladies may be virtuous enough, if you have no other cavaliers besides aldermen and divines. There was a Miscellany put out last summer, but not by Mr. Steel, nor do I know by whom. They have raked up all they could gather of mine, without my knowledge; and Mishessy has cheated you in not sending you one of them, which I got on purpose and delivered to her with my own hand. But that fault shall soon be mended. You could not pitch upon a fitter man than me to make your pedigree, who have so often been your herald; and it is fit somebody should take it out of your hands, for you have chosen most horribly for yourself. But upon second thoughts, it was the wisest course for one

<sup>1</sup> Miss Long died four days later. See *Journal to Stella*, December 25th, 1711.



who would be sure to be concealed, as the safest disguise for a prince is the habit of a beggar. I am thinking, if you and I were together at Lynn, how little the brutes would suspect what a figure we have both made in the *grand monde* in several ways. But what should I do to change my talents like you, and fit them for the country? I can neither pot nor pickle; but I can write receipts, and papers to stick upon bottles!

Mishessy is but like her neighbour—she is a politician because everybody else is so, and a Tory out of principle, without hopes of an employment. Mistress Hatton visits there, but is not her companion.<sup>1</sup> The poor girl, between sickness, domestic affairs and State speculations, has lost a good deal of her mirth. But I think there is not a better girl upon earth. I have a mighty friendship for her. She had good principles, and I have corrected all her faults; but I cannot persuade her to read, though she has an understanding, memory and taste that would bear great improvement. But she is incorrigibly idle and lazy—thinks the world made for nothing but

<sup>1</sup> This is in answer to Miss Long's remark: "If Miss Hessy keeps company with the eldest Hatton, and is still a politician, she is not the girl I took her for." Upon this sentence there has been constructed a theory that Miss Long, at this early time, looked upon Swift as a suitor of Vanessa's, and is here expressing disappointment that Vanessa was deserting him for "the eldest Hatton," another suitor. This theory may now rest in peace.

perpetual pleasure; and the deity she most adores is Morpheus. Her greatest favourites at present are Lady Ashburnham, her dog and myself. She makes me of so little consequence that it almost distracts me. She will bid her sister go downstairs before my face, for she has "some private business with the Doctor." In short, there would never be an end of telling you the hardships she puts on me, only because I have lived a dozen or fifteen years too much.

I thank you for your concern about my fortune. The Ministry never had it yet in their power, neither do I rely on their promises if they had. I hope Misessy sends you all the little Town news. But pray do not go away with it that I am acquainted with Lord Fistharding.<sup>1</sup> Though he be your admirer I cannot be his, nor was ever in the same room with him in my life.

I have said enough for a man in an ill humour, and I know you will be glad to be relieved.

I am with great respect and truth,

Madam,

Your most obedient

and most humble servant,

J.S.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Fitzhardinge.

## IV

*Swift to Vanessa.**Addressed :* To Misheskinage.*Endorsed :* 1st.

[1st August, 1712.]

Mishessy is not to believe a word Mr. Lewis says in his letter. I would have writ to you sooner if I had not been busy and idle and out of humour, and did not know how to send to you without the help of Mr. Lewis, my mortal enemy. I am so weary of this place that I am resolved to leave it in two days, and not return in three weeks. I will come as early on Monday<sup>1</sup> as I can find opportunity, and will take a little Grubstreet lodging, pretty near where I did before, and dine with you thrice a week; and will tell you a thousand secrets provided you will have no quarrels to me.

Adieu.

[Windsor] Friday, at Mr. Lewis's office.

Don't remember me to Moll, but humble service to your Mother.

<sup>1</sup> Writing to Stella on August 7th, 1712, Swift says: "I left Windsor on Monday last," i.e. the 4th. He returned in a few days.

## V

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed :* To Mrs. Esther Van Homrigh, Junior,  
at her lodgings over against  
Park-Place, in St. James's Street,  
London.

*Postmark :* Windsor, AU.

*Endorsed :* 2nd.

Windsor Castle, *August 15th, 1712.*

I thought to have written to little Misessy by the Colonel,<sup>1</sup> but at last I did not approve of him for a messenger. Mr. Ford began your health last night under the name of The Jilt, for which I desire you will reproach him. I do neither study nor exercise so much here as I did in Town. The Colonel will intercept all the news I have to tell you, of my fine snuff box,<sup>2</sup> and my being at a ball, and losing my money at Ombre with the Duke and Duchess of Shrewsbury. I cannot imagine how you pass your time in our absence, unless by lying a-bed till twelve, and then having your followers about you till dinner. We have dispatches

<sup>1</sup> "The Colonel" and "The Captain" seem to be nicknames given by Swift to Vanessa's brother, Bartholomew.

<sup>2</sup> This box was sent to Swift from France by General John Hill. See Swift's letter of thanks in *Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 386.

to-day from Lord Bolingbroke. All is admirably well, and a cessation of arms will be declared with France in London on Tuesday next. I dined with the Duke of Shrewsbury to-day, and sat an hour by Mrs. Warburton teaching her when she played wrong at Ombre, and I cannot see her defects. Either my eyes fail me, or they are partial. But Mrs. Touchet is an ugly, awkward slut. What do you do all the afternoons? How come you to make it a secret to me, that you all design to come to Windsor? If you were never here, I think you all cannot do better than come for three or four days. Five pounds will maintain you and pay for your coach backwards and forwards. I suppose the Captain will go down with you now, for want of better company. I will steal to Town one of these days, and catch you napping. I desire you and Moll will walk as often as you can in the Park, and do not sit moping at home, you that can neither work nor read nor play, nor care for company. I long to drink a dish of coffee in the Sluttery, and hear you dun me for secrets, and: "Drink your coffee—why don't you drink your coffee?"

My humble services to your Mother, and Moll, and the Colonel.

Adieu.

## VI

*Vanessa to Swift.**Endorsed :* 1st.London, *Sept. ye 1st, 1712.*

Had I a correspondent in China, I might have had an answer by this time. I never could think till now that London was so far off in your thoughts, and that twenty miles were by your computation equal to some thousands. I thought it a piece of charity to undeceive you in this point and to let you know, if you'll give yourself the trouble to write, I may probably receive your letter in a day. 'Twas that made me venture to take pen in hand the third time. Sure you'll not let it be to no purpose. You must needs be extremely happy where you are, to forget your absent friends ; and I believe you have formed a new system and think there is no more of this world, passing your sensible horizon. If this be your notion I must excuse you ; if not, you can plead no other excuse ; and if it be so, I must reckon myself of another world ; but I shall have much ado to be persuaded till you send me some convincing arguments of it. Don't dally in a thing of this consequence, but demonstrate that 'tis possible to keep up a correspond-

ence between friends, though in different worlds,  
and assure one another, as I do you, that

I am

Your most obedient  
and most humble servant,

to E. VAN HOMRIGH.<sup>1</sup>

## VII

*Vanessa to Swift.*

*Endorsed:* 2nd.

London, *Sept. ye 2nd*, 1712.

Mr. Lewis tells me you have made a solemn resolution to leave Windsor the moment we come there. 'Tis a noble res[olution]: pray keep to it. Now, that I may be noways accessory to your breaking it, I design to send Mr. Lewis word to a minute when we shall leave London, that he may

<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps the only autograph signature of Vanessa, except that in her will, now remaining. "Van Homrigh" seems the best authenticated spelling of the name during the early part, at least, of our period; and though the habit of writing it in one word soon developed, it is significant that Berkeley, while dealing with documents seen by him in London, returns in his letters to the early spelling. Twelve ways of writing the name are recorded in this volume. Orrery, writing in 1752, tells us that the name is pronounced "Vannummery."

tell you. And might I advise you, it should be to set out from Windsor just at the same ti[me] that we leave London; and if there be a byway you had better take it; for I very much apprehend that seeing us will make you break through all, at least I am sure it would make you heartily repent; and I would not for the world, could I avoid it, give you any uneasiness upon this score, because I must infallibly upon another. For when Mr. Lewis told me what you had done (which I must needs say was not in so soft a manner as he ought, both out of friendship to you and compassion to me) I immediately swore that, to be revenged of you, I would stay at Windsor as long as Mrs. H——<sup>1</sup> did, and if that was not long enough to tease you I would follow her to Hampton Court; and then I should see which would give you more vexation, seeing me but sometimes or not seeing her at all. Besides, Mr. Lewis has promised me to intercept all your letters to her and hers to you—at least he says I shall read them *en passant*; and for sealing them again, let him look to that. I think your ruin is ample contrived, for which don't blame me, but yourself; for 'twas your rashness prompted to this malice, which I should never else have thought of.

<sup>1</sup> This is most likely Mrs. Hill, mentioned many times in the *Journal to Stella* and other letters, wife of General Hill. The printed versions have "Mrs. H——c."



## VIII

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed :* To Mrs. Esther Van-homrigh the  
younger, at her lodgings over against  
Park-place, in St. James's Street,  
London.

Carriage paid.

*Endorsed :* 3rd.

Windsor Castle, *September 3, 1712.*

I send this haunch of venison to your Mother, not to you, and this letter to you, not to your Mother. I had your last, and your bill, and know your reasons. I have ordered Barber to send you the overplus, sealed up. I am full of business and ill humour : some end or other shall be soon put to both. I thought you would have been here yesterday. Is your journey hither quite off ? I hope Moll is recovered of her illness, and then you may come. Have you scaped your share in this new fever ? I have hitherto, though of late I am not very well in my head. You railly very well ; Mr. Lewis allows you to do so. I read your letter to him. I have not time to answer you, the coach and venison being just ready to go. Pray eat half an ounce at least of this venison, and present my humble service to your Mother, Moll and the Colonel. I had his letter, and will talk to him about it when he comes. This letter I doubt

will smell of venison. I wish the hangdog coachman may not spoil the haunch in the carriage.

Je suis,

à vous, &c.

IX

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed:* To Misessy.

*Endorsed:* 7th. [28th September, 1712.]<sup>1</sup>

I did not forget the coffee, for I thought you should not be robbed of it. John does not go to

<sup>1</sup> Writing to Stella from London on October 9th, 1712, Swift says: "I have left Windsor these ten days." This letter was evidently written the day before he left. Upon this letter is founded the story that Swift went to Oxford with Vanessa; but this does not seem to be the necessary, or even the easiest, interpretation of it. On the contrary, it appears that he is sending to London, by her messenger, a book, which he would have sent to her at Oxford if John had been going there. The sentence before "Adieu" is certainly ambiguous, but it is quite possible to understand it as meaning "if I do not write and get introductions for you"; and unless the second sentence of the letter is to be robbed of all point, this is the meaning it must bear. Moreover, Swift tells Stella (Oct. 9th, 1712) that since leaving Windsor he has been ill, and thereby much hindered in what he was writing (i.e. *The Four Last Years of the Queen's Reign*). It is not easy to explain why Swift was anxious that Vanessa should not be known at Oxford; but the difficulty is increased by the assumption that Swift was to be there with her and is here writing in his own interest. For if he were afraid to show her round the colleges, he would be still more afraid to stay at the same inn as her, or to meet her in company. The endorsements show that three of Swift's letters are missing between this and No. VIII. Vanessa's visit to Windsor, and probably some letters from her, had also intervened (obviously her

Oxford, so I send back the book as you desire. I would not see you for a thousand pounds if I could, but am now in my nightgown, writing a dozen letters and packing up papers. Why then, you should not have come,<sup>1</sup> and I knew that as well as you. My service to Molkin. I doubt you do wrong to go to Oxford, but now that is past, since you cannot be in London to-night; and if I do not inquire for acquaintance, but let somebody in the inn go about with you among the colleges, perhaps you will not be known.

Adieu.

Sunday, nine. Your fellow has been long coming. John presents his humble service to you both.

## X

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed :* To Miss Hussy Vanhomrigh.

*Endorsed :* 1st.

[May 31st, 1713.]<sup>2</sup>

I promised to write to you; and I have let you know that it is impossible for anybody to have more messenger had brought one, to which this is an answer); and for all we can tell, it may be that it was Vanessa herself who, for some reason, wished to escape recognition at Oxford.

<sup>1</sup> To Windsor.

<sup>2</sup> This letter was obviously written a few days before No. XI. The exact date may be inferred from the opening sentences in Swift's letter to Stella written at Chester on June 6th, 1713: "I am come here after six days. I set out on Monday last, and got here to-day. . . ."

acknowledgments at heart, for all your kindness and generosity to me. I hope this journey will restore my health : I will ride but little every day, and I will write a common letter to you all, from some of my stages, but directed to you. I could not get here till ten this night. Pray be merry, and eat and walk and be good, and send me your commands, whatever Mr. L[ewis] shall think proper to advise you. I have hardly time to put my pen to paper, but I would make good my promise. Pray God preserve you and make you happy and easy—and so adieu, brat.

Mr. B's <sup>1</sup> house, 11<sup>o</sup>at night,  
company waiting who come to take  
leave of me.  
Service to Mother and Molkin.

.XI

*Vanessa to Swift.*

*Endorsed :* 1.

London, June ye 6, 1713.

Sir,

Now you are good beyond expression in sending me that dear <sup>2</sup> voluntary from St. Albans. It

<sup>1</sup> The second endorsement expands this, no doubt correctly, to "Mr. Barber's (since Ald[erma]n Barber's) House." The word "waiting" in this sentence bears witness to Swift's extreme haste, being written "weighting."

<sup>2</sup> Vanessa wrote "Dr." here, and in another place where it certainly means "dear."

gives me more happiness than you can imagine or I describe, to find that your head is so much better already. I do assure you all my wishes are employed for the continuance of it. I hope your next will tell me the[y] have been of force. Had I the power I want, every day that did not add as much to your health, till it was quite established, as Monday last, should be struck out of the calendar as useless ones. I believe you little thought to have been teased by me so soon. „But when Mr. L[ewis] told me, if I would write to you, that he would take care of my letter, I must needs own I had not self-denial enough to forbear. Pray why did not you remember me at Dunstable as well as Moll? Lord! what a monster is Moll grown since! But nothing of poor Hess, except that the mark will be in the same place of Davila where you left it. Indeed, it is not much advanced yet, for I have been studying of Rochefoucauld to see if he describes as much self-love as I found in myself a Sunday, and I find he falls very short of it.<sup>1</sup>

How does Bolingbroke perform? You have not kept your promise of riding but a little, every day. Thirty miles I take to be a very great journey. I am very impatient to hear from you at Chester. It is impossible to tell you how often I have wished you a cup of coffee and an orange at your inn.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Letter XLIV (end of first paragraph) and *Cadenus and Vanessa*, lines 686-7.

## XII

*Swift to Mrs. Vanhomrigh.*

*Addressed :* To Madam Van, at the Sign of the  
Three Widows, in Pom-Roy Alley.  
With Care and Speed.

Present.

Chester, June 6th, 1713.

Madam,

You heard of me from Dunstable by the way of Hessy.<sup>1</sup> I have had a sad time since. If Moll's Even So had been there, she would have none left. Now Hessy grumbles that I talk of Moll. I have resolved upon the direction of my letter already ; for I reckon Hess and Moll are widows as well as you, or at least half widows. Davila goes off rarely now. I have often wished for a little of your ratsbane : what I met upon the road does not deserve the name of Ratsbane. I have told Mr. Lewis the circumstances of my journey, and the curious may consult him upon it. Who will Hessy get now to chide, or Moll to tell her stories and bring her sugar-plums ? We never know anything enough till we want it. I design to send Hessy a letter in print from Ireland, because she cannot read writing-hand, except from

<sup>1</sup> This is a slip. Swift wrote to Hessy from St. Albans, and to Moll from Dunstable. See Letter XI.

Mr. Partington.<sup>1</sup> I hope you have heard again from the Colonel, and that he is fully cured of his—I don't know what, I forget. It was under cover to Mr. Lewis that I writ to you from Dunstable. I writ to Hessy, by Barber, from St. Albans. I left London without taking leave of Sir John. I fear a person of his civility will never pardon me.

I met no adventures in all my travels; only my horse once fell under me, for which reason I will not ride him to Holyhead, I can assure him that. I could not see any marks in the chimn[ey] at Dunstable of the coffee Hessy spilt there; and I had no diamond ring about me, to write any of your names in the windows. But I saw written "Dearest Lady Betty Hamilton," and hard by, "Middleton Walker," wh[om] I take to be an Irish man-midwife, which was a plain onien of her getting a husband. I hear Moor, the handsome parson, came over with the Archbishop of Dublin. Did not he marry one Mrs. Devenish? Lord Lanesborough [has] been here lately in his way to Ireland, and has got the good will of all the folks in our town. He had something to say to every little boy he met in the streets. Well, he is the courteousest man, and nothing is so fine in the Quality as to be courteous. Now Moll laughs because I speak wisely, and now Hessy murmurs again.

<sup>1</sup> See note to Letter XV.

Well, I had a charming handsome cousin here twenty years ago : I was to see her to-night, and in my conscience she is not handsome at all. I wonder how it comes about. But she is very good neetured, and you know, Moll, good neeture is better than beauty.

I desire you will let me know what fellows Hessy has got to come to her bedside in a morning, and when you design to hobble again to Chelsea, if you did not tell me a lie, as I much suspect. My head is something better, though not so well as I expected by my journey.

I think I have said enough for a poor weary traveller. I will conclude without ceremony, and go to bed ; and if you cannot guess who is the writer, consult your pillow, and the first fine gentleman you dream of is the man.

So adieu.

### XIII

*Vanessa to Swift.*

*Endorsed :* 2nd.

London, June ye 23rd, 1713.

Here is now three long, long weeks passed since you wrote to me. Oh ! happy Dublin, that can employ all your thoughts, and happy Mrs. Emerson, that could hear from you the moment you landed. Had it not been for her, I should be yet more uneasy than I am. I really believe, before



you leave Ireland I shall give you just reason to wish I did not kno[w] my letters, or at least that I could not write ; and I had rather you should wish [so] then entirely forget me. Confess : have you once thought of me since you wrote to my mother at Chester ? which letter I assure you I take very ill. My mother and I have counted the Molls and the Hessys. 'Tis true the number is equal, but you talk to Moll, and only say " Now Hessy grumbles." How can you possibly be so ill-natured, to make me either quarrel or grumble when you are at so great a distance that 'tis impossible for me to gain by doing so ? Beside, you promised the letter should be directed to me. But I'll say no more of that, but keep my temper till we meet. Pray have you received the letter I wrote you to Chester ? I hear you had a very quick passage : I hope it was a pleasant one, and that you have no reason to complain of your health. We have had a vast deal of thunder for this week past.

I wish you had been here last Thursday : I am sure you could have prevented the bills being lost. Are you not prodigiously surprised at Sir T[homas] H[anmer] and Lord A[nglesey] ? Lord ! how much we differ from the ancients, who used to sacrifice everything for the good of their commonwealth ; but now our greatest men will at any time give up their country out of a pique, and that for

nothing.<sup>1</sup> 'Tis impossible to describe the rejoicings that are amongst the Whigs since that day, and I fear the elections will add to them. Lord Treasurer has been extremely to blame; for all his friends advised him to let it be dropped by consent till next session; but he would not, depending on the same success he had in the malt-tax. I know you'll say: "What does the slut mean, to talk all this stuff to me? If I were there I had as lieve hear it as anything she could say, but to pursue me with her nonsense is intolerable: I'll read no more. Will, go to the post office and see if there be more letters for me. What? Will this packet only serve to tease me?" I can tell you you'll have none from Lady Orkney by the post, whatever you may by any other carriage.

I have strictly observed your commands as to reading and walking. Mr. Ford can witness the latter, for he has paddled with us several nights. (I have a vast deal to tell you about him when I see you.) Mr. Lewis has given me *Les Dialogues des Monts*; and I am so charmed with them that I am resolved to quit my post, let the consequence be what it will, except you will talk to me; for I find no conversation on earth comparable but

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Cadenus and Vanessa*, lines 346-9. The bills thrown out and lamented by Vanessa were articles in the commercial treaty with France.

yours. So if you care I should stay, do but talk, and you'll keep me with pleasure.

#### XIV

*Vanessa to Swift.*

*Endorsed : 3rd.*

*June, London, 1713.*

'Tis unexpressible the concern I am in ever since I heard from Mr. Lewis that your head is so much out of order. Who is your physician ? For God sake don't be persuaded to take many slops. Satisfy me so much as to tell me what medicines you have taken and do take. How did you find yourself whilst a ship-board ? I fear 'tis your voyage has discomposed you, and then so much business following so immediately, before you had time to recruit—'twas too much. I beg, make all haste imaginable to the country ; for I firmly believe that air and rest will do you more good than anything in the world besides. If I talk impertinently, I know you have goodness enough to forgive me when you consider how great an ease 'tis to me to ask these questions, though I know it will be a great while before I can be answered—I am sure I shall think it so. Oh ! what would I give to know how you do at this instant. My fortune is too hard : your absence was enough, without this cruel addition.

Sure the powers above are envious of your thinking so well, which makes them at some times strive to interrupt you. But I must confine my thoughts, or at least stop from telling them to you, or you'll chide, which will still add to my uneasiness. I have done all that was possible to hinder myself from writing to you till I heard you were better, for fear of breaking my promise, but 'twas all in vain; for had [I] vowed neither to touch pen, ink or paper, I certainly should have had some other invention. Therefore I beg you won't be angry with me for doing what is not in my power to avoid.

Pray make Parvisol write me word what I desire to know, for I would not for the world have you hold down your head. I am impatient to the last degree to hear how you are.' I hope I shall soon have you here.

## XV

*Vanessa to Swift.*

*Endorsed:* 4th.

*June, London, 1713.*

Sir,

Mr. Lewis assures me that you are now well, but will not tell me what authority he has for it. I hope he is rightly informed; though 'tis not my usual custom, when a thing of consequence is in

doubt, to fix on what I earnestly wish. But I have already suffered so much by knowing that you were ill, and fearing you were worse then, I hope, you have be[en], that I will strive to change that thought, if possible, that I may have 'a little ease ; and more, that I may not write you a splenetic letter.

Pray why would not you make Parvisol write me word how you did, when I begged it so much ? And if you were able yourself, how could you be so cruel, to defer telling me the thing of the world I wished most to know ? If you think I write too often, your only way is to tell me so, or at least to write to me again, that I may know you don't quite forget me ; for I very much fear that I never employ a thought of yours now, except when you are reading my letters, which makes me ply you with them. Mr. Lewis complains of you too. If you are very happy it is ill-natured of you not to tell me so, except 'tis what is inconsistent with mi[ne]. But why don't you talk to me ? That, you know, will please me. I have often heard you say that you would willingly suffer a little uneasiness, provided it gave another a vast deal of pleasure. Please remember this maxim, because it makes for me. This is now the fourth letter I have wrote to you. They could not miscarry, for they were all under Mr. Lewis's cover ; nor could you avoid opening them, for the same reason.

Pray what have you done about the two livings ? Have you recovered them or no ? You know I love law-business. I have been with lawyers since I saw you, but have not yet had their answers, therefore won't trouble you with what I have done till I can tell you all. Pray let me know when you design coming over, for I must beg you to talk to Mr. P[artinton]<sup>1</sup> and settle some affairs for me. Pray let me hear from you soon, which will be an unexpressible joy to her that is always——.

<sup>1</sup> To settle affairs with this gentleman, who is mentioned also in Letters XII and XLV, seems to have been an unusually difficult task. He was executor to Vanessa's father and one of her brothers, having a reversionary interest in the estate of the latter. He found some pretext for refusing to divide a portion of Vanhomrigh's estate (some jewels are specially mentioned in this connexion) among the children, according to the will. Later on, Vanessa instituted a lawsuit against him, but he successfully resisted her till her death, and her executors for many years afterwards ; and it appears that he and Marshall (appointed co-executor with Berkeley by Vanessa's will) were united in trying to prevent the payment of claims on the estate, which Berkeley considered legal and just. On 20th July, 1725, Berkeley writes from London to Thomas Prior (his friend since their school-days, and afterwards his partisan in the tar-water controversy) who was acting for him in Ireland : " For God's sake, adjust, finish, conclude any way with Partinton ; for at the rate we have gone on these two years, we may go on for twenty." The affair was prolonged for another seven years at least, for he writes from Rhode Island, 18th March, 1732-3 : " I hope our affairs with Partinton will be finished this term." It may safely be conjectured that Mr. Partinton cured Vanessa of her love for legal business.

## XVI

*Swift to Vanessa.**Addressed :* To Miss Hussy.*Endorsed :* 3rd.*Laracor, July 8th, 1713.*

I stayed but a fortnight in Dublin, very sick, and returned not one visit of a hundred that were made me—but all to the Dean, and none to the Doctor. I am riding here for life, and think I am something better, and hate the thoughts of Dublin, and prefer a field-bed and an earthen floor before the great house there, which they say is mine. I had your last spleenatic letter. I told you when I left England, I would endeavour to forget everything there, and would write as seldom as I could. I did indeed design one general round of letters to my friends, but my health has not yet suffered me. I design to pass the greatest part of the time I stay in Ireland here in the cabin where I am now writing, neither will I leave the Kingdom till I am sent for; and if they have no further service for me I will never see England again. At my first coming I thought I should have died with discontent, and was horribly melancholy while they were installing me; but it begins to wear off, and change to dulness. My river walk is extremely pretty, and my canal in great beauty, and I see trouts playing in it.

I know not any one thing in Dublin; but Mr.

Ford is very kind, and writes to me constantly what passes among you. I find you are likewise a good politician ; and I will say so much to you, that I verily think, if the thing you know of had been published just upon the Peace, the Ministry might have avoided what hath since happened. But I am now fitter to look after willows, and to cut hedges, than meddle with affairs of state. I must order one of the workmen to drive those cows out of my Island,<sup>1</sup> and make up the ditch again ; a work much more proper for a country vicar than driving out factions and fencing against them. And I ~~must~~ go and take my bitter draught to cure my head, which is spoilt by the bitter draughts the public hath given me.

How does Davila go on ? Johnny Clark is chosen portreeve of our town of Trim ; and we shall have the assizes there next week, and fine doings ; and I must go and borrow a horse to meet the judges, and Joe Beaumont and all the boys that can get horses will go too. Mr. Warburton has but a thin school. Mr. Percival has built up the other side of his house, but people whisper that it is but scurvily built. Mr. Steers is come to live in Mr. Melthorp's house, and 'tis thought the widow Melthorp will remove to Dublin.

<sup>1</sup> Swift rented this island from the Mr. Percival mentioned towards the end of this letter. See also Miscellaneous Letters, Nos. v, vi.



Nay, if you do not like this sort of news, I have no better. So go to your Dukes and Duchesses, and leave me to Goodman Bumford and Patrick Dolan of Clonduggan.<sup>1</sup> Adieu.

## XVII

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed :* To Mrs. Esther Van-homrigh,  
at her lodgings over against the Surgeon's, in Great Rider Street,  
near St. James's Street, ~~near~~  
London.

*Endorsed :* 1st.

Upper Letcombe, near Wantage in Berkshire,

June 8th, 1714.<sup>2</sup>

You see I am better than my word, and write to you before I have been a week settled in the house where I am. I have not much news to tell you from hence, nor have I had one line from anybody since I left London, of which I am very glad. But to say the truth, I believe I shall not stay here so long as I intended. I am at a clergyman's<sup>3</sup> house,

<sup>1</sup> Swift writes this name "Clanduggan."

<sup>2</sup> This is the correct date. Swift by an oversight wrote "1713."

<sup>3</sup> "Mr. Geric, who is still living."—Hawkesworth (1766).

an old friend and acquaintance whom I love very well ; but he is such a melancholy thoughtful man, partly from nature and partly by a solitary life, that I shall soon catch the spleen from him. Out of ease and complaisance, I desire him not to alter any of his methods for me; so we dine exactly between twelve and one, at eight we have some bread and butter and a glass of ale, and at ten he goes to bed. Wine is a stranger, except a little I sent him, of which, one evening in two, we have a pint between us. His wife has been this month twenty miles off at her father's, and will not return this ten ~~days~~. I never saw her, and perhaps the house will be worse when she comes. I read all day, or walk, and do not speak as many words as I have now writ, in three days. So that in short I have a mind to steal to Ireland, unless I find myself take more to this way of living, so different in every circumstance from what I left. This is the first syllable I have writ to anybody since you saw me. I shall be glad to hear from you, not as you are a Londoner, but a friend. For I care not three pence for news, nor have heard one syllable since I am here. The Pretender or Duke of Cambridge may both be landed, and I never the wiser. But if this place were ten times worse, nothing shall make me return to Town while things are in the situation I left them. I give a guinea a week for my board, and can eat anything.

I hope you are in good health and humour. My service to Moll. My cold is quite gone.

A vous, etc.

I send my man two miles with this to the post-town, so if there be a letter by chance from you I shall not be able to tell you so now. I hope our maid carried your handbox with the papers and deeds.

### XVIII

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed :* To Mrs. Van-Hornrigh, at Mr.  
Handcock's house in "Little Ryder  
Street, near St. James's Street,  
London.

*Postmark :* Wantage, 9 [J]y.

*Endorsed :* 3.

*July 8th, 1714.*

I find you take heavily that touch on your shoulder. I would not have writ to you so soon if it were not to tell you that, if you want to borrow any money, I would have you send to Mr. Barber or Ben Tooke, which you please, and let them know it, and the sum, and that I will stand bound for it, and send them my bond. I did not know our posts went on Tuesday, else I would have writ two days ago to tell you this. I do not see how you can be uneasy when the year is out, for you can pay only what you receive, you are answerable

for no more. And I suppose you have not given bonds to pay your mother's debts. As for your £2 5s. that you gave your note for, if that be all, it is a trifle, and your owning it with so much apology looks affected. If you have no more secret debts than that, I shall be very glad. But still, I cannot understand how any of those creditors of your mother can give you the least trouble, unless there be some circumstance that I do not know the bottom of.<sup>1</sup>

I believe I shall not stay here much longer, and therefore, if you want to borrow money, I would have you do it soon, and of the two, rather of Ben Tooke; because I have just drawn a note upon

<sup>1</sup> Numerous debts were contracted about this time both by Vanessa and her sister Mary (who, though six or seven years the younger, seems to have been decidedly the more extravagant of the two in the matter of drapery). It was probably on this occasion that Vanessa borrowed fifty pounds at five per cent. from Ben Tooke. The interest was apparently never paid, and the accumulated sum was one of the many claims which were showered upon Berkeley, her executor, when he was in London in 1726-7. Vanessa had voluntarily made herself responsible for a number of her mother's debts, whereof one, it is interesting to note, was for coffee supplied from the St. James's Coffee-house. On 28th January of this year (1713-14) she gave to one Katherine Hill a promissory note for £33 7s. 6d., being a debt of her mother's; and before leaving London in October she had pawned some jewels to John Barber (see note to Letter XXXVII). Berkeley's letters to Prior in the years 1725-8 are occupied almost exclusively with the Partinton-Vanhomrigh theme and the Bermuda theme, curiously interwoven.

Barber for thirty guineas for my own expenses. I believe a bond had better be sent to me down to sign, and I will send it back to you, and you may give it Ben. You may speak freely to Ben of this; and if he has no money by him, we must apply to Barber. I am forced to conclude in haste, because the post-house is two miles off, and it will be too late if I stay longer. Adieu.

My service to Molkin.

## XIX

*Swift to Vantssa.*

*Addressed :* To Mrs. Van-Homrigh, at Mr.  
Handcock's, in Little Rider Street,  
near St. James's Street,  
London.

*Postmark :* Wantag[e], 2 Au.

*Endorsed :* 5.

*August 1st, 1714.*

I have had now two letters of yours to answer. I am pleased to see you piqued about my dearness to Ben and John<sup>1</sup>; they are worthy subjects. There are some words I never use to some people—let that satisfy. How many gentlemen, says you,

<sup>1</sup> "It would seem that the Dean, in addressing his printer and bookseller, had styled them Dear Ben and Dear John. Vanessa appears to have been jealous of a distinction never paid to her in the course of their correspondence."—SCOTT.

and fine young gentlemen, truly, would be proud to have you desire so much of them.

Who told you I was going to the Bath? No such thing. I had fixed to set out to-morrow for Ireland; but poor Lord Oxford desires I will go with him to Herefordshire; and I only expect his answer, whether I shall go there before, or meet him hereabouts, or go to Wimple (his son's house) and so go with him down; and I expect to leave this in two or three days, one way or other; I will stay with him till the Parliament meets again, if he desires it. I am not of your opinion about Lord Bolingbroke: Perhaps he may get the staff, but I cannot rely on his love to me. He knew I had a mind to be Historiographer, though I valued it not but for the public service, yet it is gone to a worthless rogue that nobody knows. I am writ to earnestly by somebody to come to Town, and join with these people now in power, but I will not do it. Say nothing of this, but guess the person.<sup>1</sup> I told Lord Oxford I would go with him when he was out, and now he begs it of me, and I cannot refuse him. I meddle not with his faults as he was a minister of state; but you know his personal kindness to me was excessive; he distinguished and chose me above all other men while he was great, and his letter to me t'other day was the most moving imaginable.

<sup>1</sup> Lady Masham. See her letter of July 29th.

The knife-handles should surely be done up in silver, and strong. I believe Brandeth, my toyman in Exchange Alley, would deal most honestly by me. Barber knows him. Where's your discretion in desiring to travel with that body,<sup>1</sup> who I believe would not do it for a thousand pounds, except it were to Italy. Pray God send you a good deliverance through your accounts; 'tis well you have been a lawyer so long. You will be two hours reading this letter, it is writ so ill. When I am fixed anywhere, perhaps I may be so gracious to let you know; but I will not promise. Service to Moll. Adieu.

## XX

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed :* To Mrs. Van-Homrigh, at Mr.  
Handcock's in Little Rider Street,  
near St. James's Street,  
London.

*Postmark :* Wantage, 13 Au.

*Endorsed :* 6.

*August 12th, 1714.*

I had your letter last post, and before you can send me another I shall set out for Ireland. I must go and take the oaths, and the sooner the better.

<sup>1</sup> Barber, whose Jacobite sympathies are (according to Scott) playfully alluded to in the last half of this sentence.

I think, since I have known you, I have drawn an old house upon my head. You should not have come by Wantage for a thousand pound. You used to brag you were very discreet. Where is it gone?<sup>1</sup> It is probable I may not stay in Ireland long, but be back by the beginning of winter. When I am there, I will write to you as soon as I can conveniently, but it shall be always under a cover; and if you write to me, let some other direct it; and I beg you will write nothing that is particular, but which may be seen; for I apprehend letters will be opened and inconveniences will happen. If you are in Ireland while I am there I shall see you very seldom. It is not a place for any freedom, but where ever[y]thing is known in a week and magnified a hundred degrees. These are rigorous laws that must be passed through; but it is probable we may<sup>2</sup> meet in London in winter, or if not, leave all to Fate, that seldom cares to humour our inclinations. I say all this out of the perfect esteem and friendship I have for you. These public misfortunes have altered all my measures and broke my spirits. God almighty bless you. I shall, I hope, be on horseback in a

<sup>1</sup> From this and the previous letter, and the expression "the Berkshire surprise" in No. XXXV, it seems certain that Vanessa paid Swift a visit, in spite of his advice, before he left Wantage.

<sup>2</sup> For "may" Swift wrote "me." Three lines higher up, for "where everything" he wrote "where-ever thing."



day after this comes to your hand.<sup>1</sup> I would not answer your questions for a million, nor can I think of them with any ease of mind. Adieu.

## XXI

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed :* To Mrs. Van-homrigh, at her  
Lodgings in Turn-Style Alley,  
near College-green,  
Dublin.

*Postmark :* No. 6.

*Endorsed :* 1st.

Philipstown, *November 5th, 1714.*

I met your servant when I was a mile from Trim, and could send him no other answer than I did, for I was going abroad by appointment. Besides, I would have not gone to Kildrohod<sup>2</sup> to see you for all the world. I ever told you you wanted discretion. I am going to a friend upon a promise, and shall stay with him about a fortnight, and then come to Town ; and I will call on you as soon as I can, supposing you lodge in Turnstile Alley, as your servant told me, and that your neighbours can tell me whereabouts. Your servant said you

<sup>1</sup> Swift left Letcombe four days after writing this letter. See his endorsement to this effect on the letter from Charles Ford dated August 14, 1714.

<sup>2</sup> The Irish name for Celbridge.

would be in Town on Monday ; so that I suppose this will be ready to welcome you there. I fear you had a journey full of fatigues : pray take care of your health in this Irish air, to which you are a stranger. Does not Dublin look very dirty to you, and the country very miserable ? Is Kildrohod as beautiful as Windsor, and as agreeable to you as the Prebend's Lodgings there ? <sup>1</sup> Is there any walk about you as pleasant as the Avenue and the Marlborough Lodge ? I have rode a tedious journey to-day, and can say no more. Nor shall you know where I am till I come, and then I will see you. Adieu for your letters and messages. Adieu.

XXII

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed :* To Misshess Van<sup>r</sup>.

*Endorsed :* 3rd.

I will see you to-morrow if possible. You know it is not above five days since I saw you, and that I would ten times more if it were at all convenient, whether your old dragon came or no, whom I

<sup>1</sup> Where Swift had stayed two years before. Cp. *Journal to Stella*, August 7, 1712: "Windsor is a most delightful place. . . . My lodgings there look upon Eton and the Thames. I wish I was owner of them ; they belong to a prebend."

believe my people cannot tell what to make of, but take him for some conjuror. Adieu.

Tuesday morning, ten.<sup>1</sup>

## XXIII

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed :* To Mrs. Hussy Van.

*Endorsed :* 4th.

[? *End of 1714.*] <sup>2</sup>

I will see you in a day or two, and believe me, it goes to my soul not to see you oftener. I will give you the best advice, countenance and assistance I can. I would have been with you sooner if a thousand impediments had not prevented me. I did not imagine you had been under difficulties : I am sure my whole fortune should go to remove them. I cannot see you, I fear, to-day, having affairs of my place to do ; but pray think it not want of friendship or tenderness, which I will always continue to the utmost.

Monday morn.

<sup>1</sup> The endorsement and content of this little note suggest that it may be in its right place here ; but there is no proof of its date.

<sup>2</sup> There is no external evidence to date this letter by ; but it seems to belong to the same period as the preceding and following letters. This and No. XXIV are both endorsed "4th," and merely on this ground have been placed side by side. But it should be noted that there is no evidence that Swift and Vanessa wrote the same number of letters.

## XXIV

*Vanessa to Swift.**Endorsed* : 4th.

Dublin, 1714.

You cannot but be sensible, at least in some degree, of the many uneasinesses I am slave to—a wretch of a brother, cunning executors and importunate creditors of my mother's—things I can no way avoid being subject to at present, and weighty enough to sink greater spirits than mine without some support. Once I had a friend that would see me sometimes, and either commend what I did or advise me what to do, which banished all my uneasiness. But now, when my misfortunes are increased by being in a disagreeable place, amongst strange, prying, deceitful people, whose company is so far from an amusement that it is a very great punishment, you fly me, and give me no reason but that we are amongst fools and must submit. I am very well satisfied that we are amongst such, but know no reason for having my happiness sacrificed to their caprice. You once had a maxim, which was to act what was right and not mind what the world said.<sup>1</sup> I wish you would keep to it now. Pray what can be wrong in seeing and advising an unhappy young woman? I can't imagine. You can't but know that your frowns make my life insupportable. You have taught me

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Cadenus and Vanessa*, lines 606–11.

to distinguish, and then you leave me miserable. Now all I beg is that you will for once counterfeit (since you can't otherwise) that indulge[nt] friend you once were till I get the better of these difficulties, for my sister's sake ; for were not she involved (who I know is not so able to manage them as I am), I have a nobler soul than sit struggling with misfortunes, when at the end I can't promise myself any real happiness. Forgive me ; and I beg you'd believe it is not in my power to avoid complaining as I do.

## XXV

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Endorsed : 6th.*

[? *End of 1714.*]

I received your letter when some company was with me on Saturday night ; and it put me in such confusion, that I could not tell what to do. I here send you the paper you left me. This morning a woman who does business for me told me she heard I was in ——<sup>1</sup> with one ——, naming you, and twenty particulars, that little master and I visited you, and that the Archbishop<sup>2</sup> did so ; and that you had abundance of wit, etc. I ever feared the tattle of this nasty town, and told you so ; and that was the reason why I said to you long ago that I

<sup>1</sup> Hawkesworth prints "in love," which is obviously the meaning. \*

<sup>2</sup> Swift wrote "the A-B."

would see you seldom when you were in Ireland. And I must beg you to be easy if for some time I visit you seldomer, and not in so particular a manner. I will see you at the latter end of the week if possible. These are accidents in life that are necessary and must be submitted to ; and tattle, by the help of discretion, will wear off.

Monday morning, ten a clock.<sup>1</sup>

## XXVI

*Vanessa to Swift.*

*Endorsed* : 6th.

Dublin, 1714.

Well, now I plainly see how great a regard you have for me. You bid me be easy, and you'd see me as often as you could. You had better said, as often as you could get the better of your inclinations so much, or as often as you remembered there was such a one in the world. If you continue to treat me as you do you will not be made uneasy by me long. 'Tis impossible to describe what I have suffered since I saw you last ; I am sure I could have bore the rack much better than those killing, killing words of yours. Sometimes I have resolved to die

<sup>1</sup> The endorsement, taken in conjunction with internal evidence, has led me to insert this undated letter here. But if this date be accepted, we must probably understand the phrase, "I said to you long ago" to refer to some conversation which took place in England : it is hardly likely that Swift uses the expression to refer to his letter of August 12th of this year.

without seeing you more ; but those resolves, to your misfortune, did not last long. For there is something in human nature that prompts one so to find relief in this world, I must give way to it, and beg you'd see me and speak kindly to me ; for I am sure you'd not condemn any one to suffer what I have done, could you but know it. The reason I write to you is because I cannot tell i[t] you, should I see you ; for when I begin to complain, then you are angry, and there is something in your look so awful, that it strikes me dumb. Oh ! that you may but have so much regard for me left, that this complaint may touch your soul with pity. I say as little as ever I can : did you but know what I thought, I am sure it would move you. Forgive me, and believe I cannot help telling you this, and live.

## XXVII

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Endorsed : 7th.*

I dined with the Provost, and told him I was coming here, because I must be at prayers at six. He said you had been with him, and would not be at home this day, and went to Celbridge to-morrow. I said I would however go try. I fancy you told him so that he might not come to-night. If he comes, you must piece it up as you can, else he will think it was on purpose to meet me, and I hate anything that looks like a secret. I cannot possibly

call after prayers, and therefore came here in the afternoon, while people were at Church, hoping certainly to find you. I am truly afflicted for poor Moll, who is a girl of infinite value ; and I am sure you will take all possible care of her ; and I hope to live to see the sincerest friendship in the world long between you. I pray God of Heaven protect you both, and am entièrement——.

Four a clock.<sup>1</sup>

## XXVIII

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed :* For Madam Hester Vanhumri.

This.

*Endorsed :* 8th.

*May 12me, 1719.*

On vous a trompé en vous disant que je suis party pour trois mois. Des affaires assez impertinentes m'ont tirée si tost, et je viens de quitter cette place pour aller voir quelques amis plus loin, purement pour le retablissement de ma santé. Croyez moy, s'il y a chose croyable au monde, que je pense tout ce que vous pouvez souhaiter de moy, et que tous vos desirs seront toujours obèi comme de commandmens quil sera impossible de violer. Je pretends de mettre cœtte lettre dans une ville de poste ou je passeray. J'iray en pu de tems visiter un seigneur, mais je ne scay encore le nom

<sup>1</sup> The probable date of this letter, if the Provost in question be Dr. Pratt, is some time in 1715 or 1716.



de sa Maison ni du païs ou il demeure. Je vous conjure de prendre garde de votre santé. J'espere que vous passerez quelque part de cet etè dans votre maison de campagne, et que vous vous promeneray a cheval autant que vous pouvez.

Vous aurez vos vers a revoir. Quand j'aurez mes pensees et mon tems libre, la Muse viendra.<sup>1</sup> Faites mes complimens a la mechante votre compagnone qui aime les contes et le Latin. J'espere que vos affaires de chicane sont en un bon train. Je vous fais des complimens sur votre perfection dans la langue François. Il faut vous connoitre long temps de<sup>2</sup> connoitre toutes vos-perfections ; toujours en vous voyant et entendant il en paroissent des nouvelles qui estoient auparavent cachées.

<sup>1</sup> These words, which are differently punctuated in different editions, are in the original : " Vous aurez vos vers a revoir, quand j'aurez mes pensees et mon tems libre, la muse viendra." It is not probable that *Cadenus and Vanessa* is here referred to, as has been suggested ; for Swift says elsewhere that he never saw the poem since he wrote it ; nor is " vos vers " a likely expression for him to use in describing it. The reference is more probably to a composition such as the Rebus by Vanessa, with the Dean's Answer, printed in Part II.

<sup>2</sup> Hawkesworth, who prints the last part of this letter (beginning at " Je vous fais des complimens "), is kind enough to insert " avant " before " de," and, just below, to change " il en paroissent " to " il en paroît." " Songer de vous " (just before the conclusion), and other linguistic gems, apparently escaped his notice. In the interests of truth, this letter is here printed exactly as it stands in the manuscript, except in the matter of punctuation, etc.

Il est honteux pour moy de ne savoir que le Gascon et le patois au prix de vous. Il n'y a rien a redire dans l'ortographie, la propriété, l'elegance, le douceur et l'esprit, et que je suis sot moy, de vous repondre en meme langage—vous, qui estes incapable d'aucune sottise, si ce n'est l'estime qu'il vous plaist d'avoir pour moy. Car il n'y a point de merite, ni aucun preuve de mon bon goût, de trouver en vous tout ce que la Nature a donne á un mortel, je veux dire l'honneur, la vertue, le bon sens, l'esprit, la douceur, l'agrement et la fermité d'ame. Mais en vous cachant comme vous faites, le monde ne vous connoit pas, et vous perdez l'eloge des millions de gens. Depuis que j'avois l'honneur de vous connoitre j'ay toujours remarqué qui, ni en conversation particuliere ni generale, aucun mot a echappé de votre bouche, qui pouvoit estre mieux exprimé ; et je vous jure qu'en faisant souvent la plus severe critique je ne pouvois jamais trouver aucun defect ni en vos actions ni en vos parolles. La coquetrie, l'affectation, la pruderie sont des imperfections que vous n'avez jamais connu. Et avec tout cela, croyez vous qu'il est possible de ne vous estimer au dessus du reste du genre humain ? Quelles bestes en juppes sont les plus excellentes de celles que je vois semées dans le monde au prix de vous. En les voyant, en les entendant, je dis cent fois le jour : « Ne parle, ne regarde, ne pense, ne fait rien comme

ces miserables. Sont ce du meme sexe, du meme espece de creatures ?” Quel cruauté, de fair mepriser autant de gens, qui sans songer de vous seroient assès supportable.

Mais il est tems de vous delasser, et diré adieu avec tous le respecte, la sincerite et l'estime du monde. Je suis et seray toujours— — — — —

## XXIX

*Vanessa to Swift.*

[? 1719-20.]

Is it possible that again you will do the very same thing I warned you of so lately ? I believe you thought I only rallied when I told you the other night I would pester you with letters. Did not I know you very well, I should think you knew but little of the world, to imagine that a woman would not keep her word whenever she promised anything that was malicious. Had not you better a thousand times throw away one hour, at some time or other of the day, then to be interrupted in your business at this rate ? For I know 'tis as impossible for you to burn my letters without reading them, as tis for me to avoid reproving you when you behave yourself so wrong. Once more I advise you, if you have any regard for your quiet, to alter your behaviour quickly, for I do assure you I have too much spirit to sit down contented with this treatment. Now, because I love frankness extremely, I here tell you that I have determined to try all

manner of human arts to reclaim you, and if all those fail I am resolved to have recourse to the black one, which, [it]<sup>1</sup> is said, never does. Now see what inconveniences you will bring both me and yourself into. Pray think calmly of it. Is it not much better to come of yourself than to be brought by force, and that, perhaps, at a time when you have the most agreeable engagement in the world? For when I undertake anything, I don't love to do it by halves. But there is one thing falls out very luckily<sup>2</sup> for you, which is, that of all the passions revenge hurries me least, so that you have it yet in your power to turn all this fury into good humour, and depend upon it, and more, I assure you. Come at what time you please, you can never fail of being very well received.

XXX

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed :* To Miss Hussy Vanhom[r]ji.

*Endorsed :* 3rd (?).

If you write as you do, I shall come the seldomer, on purpose to be pleased with your letters, which I never look into without wondering how a Brat, who cannot read, can possibly write so well. You are mistaken : send me a letter without your hand on the outside, and I hold you a crown I shall not

<sup>1</sup> "The say" is cancelled. In changing the construction, Vanessa forgot to write "it."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Vanessa wrote "luckily."

read it.<sup>1</sup> But, raillery apart, I think it inconvenient for a hundred reasons that I should make your house a sort of constant dwelling-place. I will certainly come as often as I conveniently can, but my health and the perpetual run of ill weather hinders me from going out in the morning ; and my afternoons are taken up, I know not how, that I am in rebellion with a dozen people beside yourself, for not seeing them. For the rest, you need make use of no other black art besides your ink. 'Tis a pity your eyes are not black, or I would have said the same of them ; but you are a white witch, and can do no mischief. If you have employed any of your art on the black scarf, I defy it, for one reason : guess.

Adieu,

for Dr. P[ratt] is come in to see me.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A good story illustrating Swift's habit of not opening letters which he thought unlikely to be entertaining is told by G. M. Berkeley (*Literary Relics*, p. xvi) : " Lord Orrery having one day gained admission to Swift's library, discovered a letter of his own, written several years before, lying still unopened, and on which Swift had written ' This will keep cold.' " This incident, if true, may go far to explain the malignity of Swift's earliest biographer.

<sup>2</sup> This is evidently an answer to the previous letter, but it is difficult to assign even an approximate date to them. Hawkesworth states, without giving any authority, that No. XXIX was written in 1720. If the endorsement is " 3 " it cannot belong to the later part of this year ; but the paper is torn and it is impossible to be certain on this point. The letters seem to belong to a period before the institution of " strokes " (see No. XXXIII), and to a time when Vanessa was living in Dublin and visits to Celbridge had not begun.

## XXXI

*Swift to Vanessa.**Addressed :* To Missessy.*Endorsed :* 2nd.

[13th July, 1720.]

I am now writing on Wednesday night, when you are hardly settled at home ; and it is the first hour of leisure I have had, and it may be Saturday before you have it, and then there will be Governor Huff ;<sup>1</sup> and to make you more so, I here enclose a letter to poor Ma<sup>r</sup>kin, which I will command her not to 'shew' you, because it is a love-letter. I reckon by this time the groves and fields and purling streams have made Vanessa romantic, provided poor Molkin be well. Your friend sent me the verses he promised, which I here transcribe :

Nymph, would you learn the only art  
To keep a worthy lover's heart.

First, to adorn your person well,  
In utmost cleanliness excell ;  
And tho' you must the fashions take,  
Observe them but for fashion sake.

The strongest reason will submit  
To virtue, honour, sense and wit.  
To such a nymph the wise and good  
Cannot be faithless, if they would :  
For vices all have different ends,  
But virtue still to virtue tends :

---

<sup>1</sup> Swift's name for Vanessa in a pet.

And when your lover is not true,  
 'Tis virtue fails, in him or you ;  
 And either he deserves disdain,  
 Or you without a cause complain.  
 But here Vanessa cannot err,  
 Nor are these rules applied to her : . .  
 For who could such a nymph forsake  
 Except a blockhead or a rake ?  
 Or how could she her heart bestow  
 Except where wit and virtue grew ?

In my opinion these lines are too grave, and therefore may fit you, who I fear are in the spleen ; but that is not fit either for yourself or the person you tend, to whom you ought to read diverting things. Here is an epigram that concerns you not :

Dorinda dreams of dress a-bed,  
 'Tis all her thought and art ;  
 Her lace hath got within her head,  
 Her stays stick to her heart.

If you do not like these things, what must I say ? This town yields no better. The questions which you were used to ask me, you may suppose to be all answered, just as they used to be after half an hour debate—*entendez-vous cela ?* You are to have a number of parsons in your neighbourhood, but not one that you love, for your age of loving parsons is not yet arrived. What this letter wants in length it will have in difficulty, for I believe you cannot read it. <sup>e</sup>I will write plainer to Malkin, because she is not so much used to my hand. I hold a wager there are some lines in this letter you will not understand, though you can read them.

So drink your coffee, and remember you are a desperate chip, and that the lady who calls you bastard will be ready to answer all your questions. 'Tis now Sunday night before I could finish this.

XXXII

*Vanessa to Swift.*

Celbridge [27th or 28th July],<sup>1</sup> 1720.

I thought I should have heard from you in a week, according to your promise ; but that week consisted of fourteen days, which were to me, after the first seven, very long, long ones. I own I never expected to have another letter from you, for two reasons : first because I thought you had quite forgot me, and because I was so very ill that I thought I should have died.<sup>2</sup> But ever since I received your letter, which was last Friday, I have been pretty well<sup>3</sup>. . . . .<sup>4</sup> just that day fortnight I saw you. I have done all that lay in my power to follow your example, for fear of teasing you, but find I cannot defer writing to you any longer. When I opened your letter I thought you had wrote me two, as you said perhaps you might ; but instead of that to find

<sup>1</sup> See note <sup>1</sup> to the following letter.

<sup>2</sup> which if I had, it would have made both you and I easy, *cancelled*.

<sup>3</sup> except, *cancelled*.

<sup>4</sup> The bottom of the leaf is torn away. The tops of the tall letters in the next line remain.



'twas a letter to another, and that a love-letter—how do you think I could support it? But upon my word, when I see you I have a vast deal to say to you about that letter. I have asked you<sup>1</sup> all the questions I used, ten thousand times, and don't find them answered at all to my satisfaction.

## XXXIII

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed :* To Missess.

*Endorsed :* 3rd.

<sup>1</sup> [August 4th, 1720.]

If you knew how many little difficulties there are in sending letters to you, it would remove five parts in six of your quarrel; but since you lay hold of my promises, and are so exact to the day, I shall promise you no more; and rather choose to be better than my word, than worse. I am confident you came chiding into the world, and will continue so while you are in it. I was in great apprehension that poor Malkin was worse, and till I could be satisfied in that particular, I would not write again. But I little expected to have heard of your own ill health, and those who saw you since made no mention to me of it. I wonder what Malkin meant by shewing you my letter: I will write to her no more, since she can keep secrets

<sup>1</sup> This word "you" was perhaps not in the copy sent to Swift. See Letter XXXIV.

no better. It was the first love-letter I have writ these dozen years, and since I have so ill success I will write no more—never was a *belle passion* so defeated. But the Governor, I hear, is jealous, and upon your word you have a vast deal to say to me about it. Mind your nursekeeping, do your duty and leave off your huffing.

One would think you were in love, by dating your letter August 29th, by which means I received it just a month before it was written.<sup>1</sup> You do not find I answer your questions to your satisfaction. Prove to me first that it was ever possible, to answer anything to your satisfaction, so as that you would not grumble in half an hour. I am glad my writing puzzles you, for then your time will be employed in finding it out ; and I am sure it costs me a great many thoughts to make my letters difficult. Sure, Glass Heel<sup>2</sup> is come over, and gave me a message from J[ohn] B[arber] about the money on the jewels, which I will answer. Molkin will be so glad to see Glass Heel—ay, Malkin. Yesterday I was half-way towards you, where I dined, and returned weary enough. I ask[ed] where that road to the left led, and they named the place.

I wish your letters were as difficult as mine ;

<sup>1</sup> By this passage we can date approximately the two preceding letters. August 4th, 1720, was a Thursday, so the Friday mentioned by Vanessa is July 22nd.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Elrington Ball states, with great probability, that this means Charles Ford (*Correspondence*, iii, 59).

for then they would be of no consequence if they were dropped by careless messengers. A stroke thus — — — signifies everything that may be said to Cad— at beginning or conclusion. It is I who ought to be in a huff that anything written by Cad— should be difficult to Skinage.

I must now leave off abruptly, for I intend to send this letter to-day. August 4th. — — — —

## XXXIV

*Vanessa to Swift.*

Celbridge, 1720.

— — —, — Cad—, you are good beyond expression, and I will never quarrel again if I can help it; but, with submission, 'tis you that are so hard to be pleased, though you complain of me. I thought the last letter I wrote you was obscure and constrained enough: I took pains to write it after that manner. It would have been much easier for me to have wrote otherwise. I am not so unreasonable as to expect you should keep your word to a day, but six or seven days are great odds. Why should your apprehensions for Molkin hinder you from writing to me? I think you ought to have wrote the sooner to have comforted me. Malkin is better, but in a very weak way. Though those that saw me told you nothing of my illness, I do assure you I was for twenty-four hours as ill as 'twas possible to be, and live. You wrong me when you say I did not find that you answered

my questions to my satisfaction. What I said was, I had asked those questions,<sup>1</sup> but could not find them answered to my satisfaction. How could they be answered in absence, since Somnus is not my friend? We have had a vast deal of thunder and lightning. Where do you think I wished to be then? and do you think that was the only time I wished so since I saw you? I am sorry my jealousy should hinder you from writing more love-letters, for I must chide sometimes, and I wish I could gain by it at this instant, as I have done and hope to do. Is my dating my letter wrong the only sign of my being in love? Pray tell me, did not you wish to come where that road to the left would have led you? I am mightily pleased to hear you talk of being in a huff. 'Tis the first time you ever told me so. I wish I could see you in one. I am now as happy as I can be without seeing — — — Cad. I beg you'll continue happiness to your own Skinage.

## XXXV

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed:* To Miste.

*Endorsed:* 4th.

*August 12th, 1720.*

I apprehended, on the return of the porter I sent with my last letter, that it would miscarry,

<sup>1</sup> "as you bid" and a word which looks like "old" are perhaps intended to be inserted here.

because I saw the rogue was drunk ; but yours made me easy. I must neither write to Malkin, nor not write to her. You are like Lord Pembroke, who would neither go nor stay. Glass Heel talks of going to see you, and taking me with him, as he goes to his country house. I find you have company with you these two or three days : I hope they are diverting, at least to poor Malkin. Why should Cad's letters be difficult ? , I assure you ——'s are not at all.

I am vexed that the weather hinders you from any pleasure in the country, because walking, I believe, would be of good use to you and Malkin. I reckon you will return a prodigious scholar, a most admirable nursekeeper, a perfect huswife and a great drinker of coffee. I have asked, and am assured there is not one beech in all your groves to carve a name on, nor a purling stream, for love or money, except a great river,<sup>1</sup> which sometimes roars, but never murmurs—just like Governor Huff. We live here in a very dull Town, every valuable creature absent, and Cad— says he is weary of it, and would rather drink his coffee on the barrenest, highest mountain in Wales than be king here.

A fig for partridges and quails ;  
 Ye dainties, I know nothing of ye,  
 But on the highest mount in Wales  
 Would choose in peace to drink my coffee.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Liffey.

And you know very well that coffee makes us severe and grave and philosophical.

What would you give to have the history of Cad— and — exactly written, through all its steps, from the beginning to this time? I believe it would do well in verse, and be as long as the other. I hope it will be done. It ought to be an exact chronicle of twelve years, from the time of spilling the coffee to drinking of coffee, from Dunstable to Dublin, with every single passage since. There would be the chapter of the blister; the chapter of Madam going to Kensington; the chapter of the Colonel's going to Franc[e]; the chapter of the wedding, with the adventure of the lost key; of the strain; of the joyful return; two hundred chapters of madness; the chapter of long walks; the Berkshire surprise; fifty chapters of little times; the chapter of Chelsea; the chapter of swallow, and cluster; a hundred whole books of myself and so low<sup>1</sup>; the chapter of hide and whisper; the chapter of Who made it so? My sister's money.<sup>2</sup> Cad— bids me tell you, that if

<sup>1</sup> The printed version has "myself, etc.," no doubt through an intermediate mistranscription "myself and so on." "So low" was Vanessa's phrase for describing the neurotic depression to which she was subject. Compare Letter XLIII (end of first paragraph), where Swift employs the expression in a manner showing its use as jargon.

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately for our knowledge of the story of Swift and Vanessa, this poem was not written, or if it was

you complain of his puzzling you with difficult writing, he will give you enough of it.

See how much I have written without saying one word of Molkin, and you will be whipped before you will deliver her a message with honour. I shall write to J. Barber next post, and desire him to be in no pains about his money; and I will take not one word of notice of his riches, on purpose to vex him. If Heaven had looked upon riches to be a valuable thing, it would not have given them to such a scoundrel.<sup>1</sup> I delivered your enclosed letter to our friend,<sup>2</sup> who happened to be with me when I received it. I find you are

written, has not survived. The spilling of coffee and, probably, the "Colonel's" being in France are referred to in Letter XII. "The Colonel" (Bartholomew Vanhomrigh) was in France at the date of this letter. Prior, writing from Paris, 8th April, 1713, says: "I can't find Van Humeringh since he brought me your letter," and on 16th August: "Vanhoumerigh has run terribly here into debt, and being in durance has sent to his mother upon pecuniary concerns." The Chapter of Chelsea is a reference to the time when Swift was living in Chelsea and was at the Vanhomrigh's house twice a day to change his wig and gown. "Madam going to Kensington" may mean an occasion when Swift was visited there by the Vanhomrighs, but of this we have no proof. The Berkshire Surprise must be the surprise visit paid by Vanessa to Swift at Letcombe.

<sup>1</sup> Though this passage does not look like jesting, Vanessa must have known it was so. Barber was one of Swift's best friends.

<sup>2</sup> Probably Cadenus, who is spoken of above and elsewhere as a separate person.

very much in his good graces ; for he said a million of fine things upon it, though he would let nobody read a word of it but himself, though I was so kind to shew him yours to me, as well as this, which he has laid a crown with me you will not understand—which is pretty odd for one that sets up for so high an opinion of your good sense.

I am ever, with the greatest truth, Your, etc.

Aug. 13.

### XXXVI

*Vanessa to Swift.*

Celbridge, 1720.<sup>1</sup>

—, —, —, Cad, is it possible you will come and see me ? I beg for God sake you will. I would give the world to see you here, and Molkin would be extremely happy. Do you think the time long since I saw you ? I did design seeing you this week, but will not stir, in hopes of your coming here. I beg you'll write two or three words by the bearer to let me know if you think you'll come this week : I shall have the note to-night. You make me happy beyond expression by your goodness. It would be too much once to hope for such a history. If you had laid a thousand pound that I should not understand your letter, you had lost it. Tell me sincerely, did those circumstances crowd on you, or did you recollect them to make me happy ?

<sup>1</sup> This letter was evidently written immediately on receipt of No. XXXV.



## XXXVII

*Swift to Vanessa.**Addressed :* To Missessy.*Endorsed :* 5th.*October 15th, 1720.*

I sit down with the first opportunity I have, to write to you ; and the Lord knows when I can find conveniency to send this letter ; for all the morning I am plagued with impertinent visits, or impertinent business below any man of sense or honour to endure, if it were any way avoidable. Dinners and afternoons and evenings are spent abroad and in walking, to help and avoid spleen, so far as I can ; so that when I am not so good a correspondent as I could wish, you are not to quarrel and be Governor, but to impute it to my situation, and to conclude infallibly that I have the same respect, esteem and kindness for you I ever professed to have and shall ever preserve, because you will always merit the utmost that can be given you—especially if you go on to read, and still further improve your mind and the talents that nature has given you. I had a letter from your friend J. B[arber] in London, in answer to what I told you that Glass<sup>1</sup> said about the money. J. B.'s answer is, that you are a person of honour that you need give yourself no trouble about it,

<sup>1</sup> i.e. "Glass Heel." See note <sup>2</sup> to Letter XXXIII.

that you will pay when you are able, and he shall be content till then.<sup>1</sup> Those are [h]is very words ; and you see he talks in the style of a rich man, which he says he yet is, though terribly pulled down by thè fall of stocks. I am glad you did not sell your annuities, unless somebody were to manage and transfer them while stocks were high.

I am in much concern for poor Malkin, and the more because I am sure you are so too. You ought to be as cheerful as you can, for both your sakes, and read pleasant things that will make you laugh, and not sit moping with your elbows on your knees on a little stool by the fire. It is most infallible that riding would do Malkin more good than any other thing, provided fair days and warm clothes be provided ; and so it would, to you ; and if you lose any skin, you know Job says : Skin for skin will a man give for his life. It is either Job or Satan says so, for aught you know.

October 17th.—I had not a moment to finish this since I sat down to it. A person was with me just now, and interrupted me as I was going on, with telling me of great people here losing their places ; and now some more are coming about business, so adieu till by and by or to-morrow.

October 18th.—I am getting an ill head in this

<sup>1</sup> Barber, moreover, still held the jewels, which presumably were ample security. He sold them nearly three years after Vanessa's death. See note to Letter XVIII.

cursed town, for want of exercise. I wish I were to walk with you fifty times about your garden, and then — drink your coffee. I was sitting last night with half a score of both sexes for an hour, and grew as weary as a dog. Glass Heel takes up abundance of my time in spite of my teeth, everybody grows silly and disagreeable, or I grow monkish and spleenatic, which is the same thing. Conversation is full of nothing but South Sea, and the ruin of the kingdom, and scarcity of money. I had a thousand times hear the Governor chide two hours without reason.

October 20th.—The Governor was with me at six o'clock this morning, but did not stay two minutes, and deserves a chiding, which you must give when you drink your coffee next. I hope to send this letter to-morrow. I am a good deal out of order in my head after a little journey I made, and ate too much, I suppose, or travelling in a coach after it. I am now sitting at home alone, and will go write to Molkin — — so adieu — — — — —.

## XXXVIII

*Vanessa to Swift.*

*Endorsed: 1st.*

Celbridge, 1720.

You had heard from me before, but that my messenger was not to be had till to-day; and now

I have only time to thank you for yours, because he is going about his business this moment, which is very happy for you, or you would have had a long letter full of spleen. Never was human creature more distressed than I have been since I came. Poor Molkin has had two or three relapses, and is in so bad a way that I fear she will never recover. Judge now what a way I am in, absent from you and loaded with melancholy on her score. I have been very ill with a stitch in my side, which is not very well yet.

## XXXIX

*Vanessa to Swift.*

Celbridge, 1720.

Believe me 'tis with the utmost regret that I now complain to you, because I know your good nature such, that you cannot see any human creature miserable without being sensibly touched. Yet what can I do? I must either unload my heart and tell you all its griefs, or sink under the unexpressible distress I now suffer by your prodigious neglect of me. 'Tis now ten long, long weeks since I saw you, and in all that time I have never received but one letter from you, and a little note with an excuse. Oh, — — — how have you forgot me! You endeavour by severities to force me from you; nor can I blame you, for with

the utmost distress and confusion I behold myself the cause of uneasy reflections to you. Yet I cannot comfort you, but here declare that 'tis not in the power of art, time or accident to lessen the unexpressible passion which I have for — —. Put my passion under the utmost restraint, send me as distant from you as the earth will allow, yet you cannot banish those charming ideas, which will ever stick by me whilst I have the use of memory. Nor is the love I bear you only seated in my soul, for there is not a single atom of my frame that is not blended with it. Therefore don't flatter yourself that separation will ever change my sentiments, for I find myself unquiet in the midst of silence, and my heart is at once pierced with sorrow and love. For Heaven's sake tell me what has caused this prodigious change in you, which I have found of late. If you have the least remains of pity for me left, tell me tenderly. No, don't tell it, so that it may cause my present death; and don't suffer me to live a life like a languishing death, which is the only life I can lead if you have lost any of your tenderness for me.

## XL

*Vunessa to Swift.*

Celbridge, 1720.

Tell me sincerely if you have once wished with earnestness to see me since I wrote to you. No,

so far from that, you have not once pitied me, though I told you how I was distressed. Solitude is unsupportable to a mind which is not easy. I have worn out my days in sighing, and my nights with watching and thinking of —, —, —, — — —, who thinks not of me. How many letters must I send you before I shall receive an answer? Can you deny me in my misery the only comfort which I can expect at present? Oh! that I could hope to see you here, or that I could go to you. I was born with violent passions, which terminate all in one—that unexpressible passion I have for you. Consider the killing emotions which I feel from your neglect of me, and shew some tenderness for me, or I shall lose my senses. Sure, you cannot possibly be so much taken up but you might command a moment to write to me, and force your inclinations to do so great a charity.

I firmly believe, could I know your thoughts (which no human creature is capable of guessing at, because never any one living thought like you), I should find that you have often in a rage wished me religious, hoping then I should have paid my devotions to Heaven. But that would not spare you, for was I an enthusiast, still you'd be the deity I should worship. What marks are there of a deity but what you are to be known by? You are present everywhere; your dear

image is always before eyes ; sometimes you strike me with that prodigious awe, I tremble with fear ; at other times a charming compassion shines through your countenance, which revives my soul. Is it not more reasonable to adore a radiant form one has seen, than one only described ?

## XLI

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressee :* To Mrs. Esthr. Van.

I am surprised and grieved beyond what I can express. I read your letter twice before I knew what it meant, nor can I yet well believe my eyes. Is that poor good creature dead ? I observed she looked a little ghastly on Saturday, but it is against the usual way for one in her case to die so sudden. For God's sake get your friends about you, to advise and to order everything in the forms. It is all you have to do. I want comfort myself in this case, and can give little. Time alone must give it to you. Nothing now is your part but decency. I was wholly unprepared against so sudden an event, and pity you most of all creatures at present.

Monday.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Probably the day of Mary Vanhomrigh's death. She was buried on March 3rd, 1720-21.

## XLII

*Swift to Vanessa.**Addressed :* To Mrs. Esth<sup>r</sup>. Vanhomrih.[? 1721] <sup>1</sup>

June 1st. — — — — — I cannot contrive to get this catalogue copied out, and therefore have delivered it to Mr. Worrall<sup>2</sup> for you, and told him it was some papers directed to me for you from England.

Pray God protect you. Adieu.

## XLIII

*Swift to Vanessa.**Addressed :* To Mrs. Vanhomrigh.

Gaulstown, near Kinnegad, July 5th, 1721.

It was not convenient, hardly possible, to write to you before now, though I had a more than ordinary desire to do it, considering the disposition

<sup>1</sup> The date 1721 is suggested for this note, since it belongs to the period of "strokes," and is not endorsed with a number, as are all Swift's letters to Vanessa up to the end of 1720 ; and on June 1st, 1722, Swift was writing from Clogher. On the back is a legend : " Letters f. . . . ny & Dublin," the space between " f " and an obscure letter, possibly " a," preceding " ny " being covered by a wafer. The endorsement is possibly by Vanessa, but if so, the writing is not characteristic.

<sup>2</sup> Vicar of St. Patricks, " with whom," as Scott says, " Swift lived on a very easy footing, occasionally dining at his house at a fixed board."



I found you in last ; though I hope I left you in a better. I must here beg you to take more care of your health, by company and exercise ; or else the spleen will get the better of you, than which there is not a more foolish or troublesome disease, and what you have no pretences in the world to, if all the advantages of life can be any defence against it. Cad— assures me he continues to esteem and love and value you above all things, and so will do to the end of his life, but at the same time entreats that you would not make yourself or him unhappy by imaginations. The wisest men of all ages have thought it the best course to seize the minutes as they fly, and to make every innocent action an amusement. If you knew how I struggle for a little health, what uneasiness I am at in riding and walking, and refraining from everything agreeable to my taste, you would think it but a small thing to take a coach now and then, and to converse with fools or impertinents, to avoid spleen and sickness. Without health, you will lose all desire of drinking your coffee, and *so low* as to have no spirits.

I answer all your questions that you were used to ask Cad—, and he protests he answers them, in the affirmative. How go your law affairs ? You were once a good lawyer, but Cad— hath spoiled you. I had a weary journey in an Irish stage-coach, but am pretty well since. Pray write

to me cheerfully, without complaints or expostulations, or else Cad— shall know it and punish you.

What is this world, without being as easy in it as prudence and fortune can make it? I find it every day more silly and insignificant, and I conform myself to it for my own ease. I am here as deep employed in other folks' plantations and ditchings as if they were my own concern, and think of my absent friends with delight, and hopes of seeing them happy and of being happy with them. Shall you, who have so much honour and good sense, act otherwise, to make Cad—and yourself miserable? Settle your affairs, and quit this scoundrel island, and things will be as you desire.

I can say no more, being called away, mais soyez assurée que jamais personne du monde a été aimée, honorée, estimée, adorée par votre ami que vous. I drank no coffee since I left you nor intend till I see you again. There is none worth drinking but yours, if myself may be the judge.

Adieu.

## XLIV

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed:* To Mrs. Vanhomrigh.

Clogher, June 1st, 1722.

This is the first time I have set pen to paper since I left Dublin, having not been in any settled place till ten days ago, and I missed one post by

ignorance, and that has stopped me five days. Before that time I was much out of order, by usual consequences of wet weather and change of drink, neither am I yet established, though much better than I was. The weather has been so constantly bad, that I have wanted all the healthy advantages of the country, and seems likely to continue so. It would have been infinitely better once a week to have met Kendall, and so forth, where one might pass three or four hours in drinking coffee in the morning, or dining *tête-à-tête*, and drinking coffee again till seven. I answer all the questions you can ask<sup>1</sup> me in the affirmative. I remember your detesting and despising the conversations of the world. I have been so mortified with a man and his lady here two days, that it has made me as peevish as—I want a comparison. I hope you are gone or going to your country seat, though I think you have a term upon your hands: I shall be here long enough to receive your answer, and perhaps to write to you again; but then I shall go further off (if my health continues) and shall let you know my stages. I have been for some days as spleenatic as ever you were in your life, which is a bold word. Remember I still enjoin you reading and exercise for the improvement of your mind

<sup>1</sup> Here Swift wrote "answer," but he obviously meant "ask."

and health of your body, and grow less romantic, and talk and act like a man of this world. It is the saying of the world, and I believe you often say, I love myself; but I am so low, I cannot say it, though your new acquaintance were with you, which I heartily wish, for the sake of you and myself.

God send you through your law and your reference; and remember that riches are nine parts in ten of all that is good in life, and health is the tenth. Drinking coffee comes long after, and yet it is the eleventh; but without the two former you cannot drink it right; and remember the china in the old house, and Ryder Street, and the Colonel's journey to France, and the London Wedding, and the sick lady at Kensington, and the indisposition at Windsor, and the strain by the box of books at London. Last year I writ you civilities, and you were angry: this year I will write you none, and you will be angry; yet my thoughts were still the same, and I give you leave to be carver,<sup>1</sup> and will be answerable

<sup>1</sup> This word seems to have baffled previous transcribers, for Hawkesworth omits the phrase and Scott leaves a blank. The reading is not certain, but the first five letters are fairly clear, while the last three are similar to the 'ver' of the word "over" in No. ix of the Miscellaneous Letters. For the meaning, the N.E.D. gives a seventeenth century quotation, "We are ill carvers for ourselves," where the word has, as here, almost the sense of "chooser."

for them. I hope you will let me have some of your money when I see you, which I will pay you honestly again. Répondez-moy si vous entendez bien tout cela, et croyez que je seray toujours tout ce que vous désirerez. Adieu.

## XLV

*Vanessa to Swift.*

—, —, —, Cad, I thought you had quite forgot both me and your promise of writing to me. Was it not very unkind to be five weeks absent without sending me one line to let me know you were well and remembered me? Besides, you have had such bad weather that you could have no diversion abroad. What then could you do but write and read? I know you do not love cards, neither is this a time of year for that amusement. Since I saw you I have gone more into this world than I did for some time past, because you commanded me; and I do here protest that I am more and more sick of it every day than other. One day this week I was to visit a great lady that has been a-travelling for some time past, where I found a very great assembly of ladies and beaux, dressed (as I suppose) to a nicety. I hope you'll pardon me now, if I tell you that I heartily wished you a spectator; for I very much question if in your life you ever saw the like

scene, or one more extraordinary. The lady's behaviour was blended with so many different characters, I cannot possibly describe it without tiring your patience. But the audience seemed to me a creation of her own, they were so very obsequious. Their forms and gestures were very like those of baboons and monkeys. They all grinned and chattered at the same time, and that of things I did not understand. The room being hung with arras, in which were trees, very well described, just as I was considering their beauty and wishing myself in the country with — —, one of these animals snatched my fan and was so pleased with me, that it seized me with such a panic, that I apprehended nothing less than being carried up to the top of the house, and served as a friend of yours was; but in this one of their own species came in, upon which they all began to make their grimaces; which opportunity I took, and made my escape.<sup>1</sup>

I have not made one single step in either law or reference since I saw you. I meet with nothing but disappointments, yet I am obliged to stay in Town attending on Mr. P[artinton], etc., which is very hard. I do declare I have so little joy in life, that I don't care how soon mine ends. Fo.

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to *Gulliver's Travels* (Part II, Chapter 5) which was not published till October, 1726. Swift must have read or lent the manuscript to Vanessa.

God sake write to me soon and kindly, for in your absence your letters are all the joy I have on earth; and sure you are too good-natured to grudge one hour in a week to make any human creature happy. — — — — Cad, think of me and pity me.

## XLVI

*Swift to Vanessa.*

*Addressed:* To Mrs. Vanhomrigh.

Lough-Gall, County of Armagh, &

*July 13th, 1722.*

I received yours, and have changed places so often since that I could not assign a place where I might expect an answer from — —; and if you be now in the country, and this letter does not reach you in the due time after the date, I shall not expect to hear from you, because I leave this place the beginning of August. I am well pleased with the account of your visit and the behaviour of the ladies. I see every day as silly things among both sexes, and yet endure them, for the sake of amusements. The worst thing in you and me is that we are too hard to please, and whether we have not made ourselves so, is the question. At least I believe we have the same reason. "One thing I differ from you in, that I do not quarrel with my best friends. I

believe you have ten angry passages in your letter, and every one of them enough to spoil two days apiece of riding and walking. We differ prodigiously in one point : I fly from the spleen to the world's end, you run out of your way to meet it. I doubt the bad weather has hindered you much from the diversions of your country house, and put you upon thinking in your chamber. The use I have made of it was to read I know not how many diverting books of history and travels. I wish you would get yourself a horse, and have always two servants to attend you, and visit your neighbours, the worse the better. There is a pleasure in being revered, and that is always in your powers, by your superiority of sense, and an easy fortune. The best maxim I know in this life is, to drink your coffee when you can, and when you cannot, to be easy without it. While you continue to be spleenatic, count upon it, I will always preach. Thus much I sympathise with you, that I am not cheerful enough to write, for I believe coffee once a week is necessary to that. I can sincerely answer all your questions, as I used to do ; but then I give all possible way to amusements, because they preserve my temper as exercise does my health ; and without health and good humour I had rather be a dog. I have shifted scenes oftener than I ever did in my life, and I believe have lain in thirty beds since



I left the town, and always drew up the clothes with my left hand, which is a superstition I have learned these ten years.

These country posts are always so capricious, that we are forced to send our letters at a call, on a sudden ; and mine is now demanded, though it goes not out till to-morrow. Be cheerful, and read and ride and laugh, as Cad— used to advise you long ago. I hope your affairs are on some better settlement. I long to see you in figure and equipage, pray do not lose that taste. Farewell.

## XLVII

*Vanessa to Swift.*

—, —, —, Cad, I am and cannot avoid being in the spleen to the last degree. Everything combines to make me so. Is it not very hard to have so good a fortune as I have, and yet no more command of that fortune than if I had no title to it ? One of the d[octo]rs is— I don't know what to call him. He behaved himself so abominably to me the other day, that had I been a man he should have heard more of it. In short he does nothing but trifle and make excuses, I really believe he heartily repents that ever he undertook it, since he heard the counsel first plead, finding

his friend more in the wrong than he imagined. Here am I, obliged to stay in this odious town attending, and losing my health and humour. Yet this and all other disappointments in life can bear with ease, but that of being neglected by —, —, —, Cad. He has often told me that the best maxim in life, and always held by the wisest in all ages, is to seize the moments as they fly; but those happy moments always fly out of the reach of the unfortunate. Pray tell — — — Cad I don't remember any angry passages in my letter, and I am very sorry if [they] appeared so to him. Spleen I cannot help, so you must excuse it. I do [all] I can to get the better of it and it is too strong for me.

I have read more since I saw Cad than I did in a great while past, and chose those books that required most attention, on purpose to engage my thoughts; but I find the more I think the more unhappy I am. I had once a mind not to have wrote to you, for fear of making you uneasy to find me so dull, but I could not keep to that resolution. For the pleasure of writing to you, the satisfaction I have in you remembering me when you read my letter, and the delight I have in expecting one from — — — Cad, makes me rather choose to give you some uneasiness than to add to my own.

## XLVIII

*Swift to Vanessa.**Addressed:* To Mrs. Vanhomrigh.*August 7th, 1722.*

I am this hour leaving my present residence, and if I fix anywhere, shall let you know it; for I would fain wait till I get a little good weather for riding and walking, there never having been such a season as this remembered; though I doubt you know nothing of it but what you learn by sometimes looking out at your back windows to call your people. I had your last, with a spleenatic account of your law affairs. You were once a better solicitor, when you could contrive to make others desire your consent to an Act of Parliament against their own interest to advance yours. Yet at present you want neither power nor skill, but disdain to exercise either. When you are melancholy, read diverting or amusing books: it is my receipt, and seldom fails. Health, good humour and fortune are all that is valuable in this life, and the last contributes to the two former.

I have not rode in all above poor four hundred miles since I saw you, nor do I believe I shall ride above two hundred more till I see you again. But I desire you will not venture to shake me by the hand; for I am in mortal fear of the itch, and

have no hope left, but that some ugly vermin called ticks have got into my skin, of which I have pulled out some and must scratch out the rest. Is not this enough to give one the spleen? for I doubt no Christian family will receive me. And this is all a man gets by a northern journey. It would be unhappy for me to be as nice in my conversation and company as you are, which is the only thing wherein you agree with Glass-heel, who declares there is not a conversable creature in Ireland except Cad—. What would you do in these parts, where politeness is as much a stranger as cleanliness?

I am stopped, and this letter is intended to travel with me, so adieu till the next stage.

August 8th.—Yesterday I rode 28 miles without being weary, and I wish little Heskinage could do as much. \*Here I leave this letter to travel one way while I go another, but where I do not know, nor what cabins or bogs are in my way. I see you this moment as you are visible at ten in the morning; and now you are asking your questions round, and I am answering them with a great deal of affected delays; and the same scene has passed forty times, as well as the other from two till seven, longer than the first by two hours, yet each has *ses agrémens particuliers*.

A long vacation, law lies asleep, and bad weather: how do you wear away the time? Is it among

the fields and groves of your country seat, or among your cousins in Town, or thinking in a train that will be sure to vex you, and then reasoning and forming teasing conclusions from mistaken thoughts? The best companion for you is a philosopher, whom you would regard as much as a sermon. I have read more trash since I left you than would fill all your shelves, and am abundantly the better for it, though I scarce remember a syllable. Go over the scenes of Windsor, Cleveland Row, Ryder Street, St. James's, Kensington, the Slattery, the Colonel in France, etc. Cad thinks often of these, especially on horseback, as I am assured. What a foolish thing is Time, and how foolish is man, who would be as angry if time stopped as if it passed. But I will not proceed at this rate, for I am writing and thinking myself fast into the spleen, which is the only thing I would not compliment you by imitating. So adieu till the next place I fix in, if I fix at all till I return, and that I leave to fortune and the weather.

## II

# CADENUS AND VANESSA AND OTHER DOCUMENTS



## CADENUS AND VANESSA

THE shepherds and the nymphs were seen  
Pleading before the Cyprian queen.

The counsel for the fair began,  
Accusing the false creature, Man.

The brief with weighty crimes was charged, 5  
On which the pleader much enlarged ;

That Cupid now has lost his art,  
Or blunts the point of every dart ;

His altar now no longer smokes,  
His mother's aid no youth invokes : 10

This tempts freethinkers to refine  
And bring in doubt their powers divine ;

Now love is dwindled to intrigue

And marriage grown a money-league.

Which crimes aforesaid (with her leave) 15

Were (as he humbly did conceive)

Against our Sovereign Lady's peace,

Against the statute in that case,

Against her dignity and crown

Then prayed an answer, and sat down. 20

The nymphs with scorn beheld their foes :  
When the defendant's counsel rose,



And, what no lawyer ever lacked,  
With impudence owned all the fact ;  
But, what the gentlest heart would vex, 25  
Laid all the fault on t'other sex.  
That modern love is no such thing  
As what those ancient poets sing,  
A fire celestial, chaste, refined,  
Conceived and kindled in the mind, 30  
Which, having found an equal flame,  
Unites, and both become the same,  
In different breasts together burn,  
Together both to ashes turn ;  
But women now feel no such fire, 35  
And only know the gross desire ;  
Their passions move in lower spheres,  
Where'er caprice or folly steers.  
A dog, a parrot, or an ape,  
Or some worse brute in human shape, 40  
Engross the fancies of the fair  
The few soft moments they can spare  
From visits to receive and pay,  
From scandal, politics and play,  
From fans and flounces and brocades, 45  
From equipage and Park-parades,  
From all the thousand female toys,  
From every trifle that employs  
The out or inside of their heads  
Between their toilets and their beds. 50  
In a dull stream, which moving slow

You hardly see the current flow,  
If a small breeze obstruct the course  
It whirls about for want of force,  
And in its narrow circle gathers 55  
Nothing but chaff, and straws, and feathers.

The current of a female mind  
Stops thus, and turns with every wind,  
Thus whirling round, together draws  
Fools, fops and rakes, for chaff and straws. 60

Hence we conclude no women's hearts  
Are won by virtue, wit and parts ;  
Nor are the men of sense to blame  
For breasts incapable of flame :  
The fault must on the nymphs be placed, 65  
Grown so corrupted in their taste.

The pleader, having spoke his best,  
Had witness ready to attest,  
Who fairly could on oath depose,  
When questions on the fact arose, 70  
That every article was true,  
Nor further those deponents knew ;  
Therefore he humbly would insist  
The bill might be with costs dismissed.

The cause appeared of so much weight 75  
That Venus, from her judgment-seat,  
Desired them not to talk so loud,  
Else she must interpose a cloud ;  
For if the heavenly folks should know  
These pleadings in the courts below, 80

That mortals here disdain to love,  
She ne'er could shew her face above  
For gods, their betters, are too wise  
To value that which men despise :  
And then, said she, my son and I 85  
Must stroll in air 'twixt land and sky,  
Or else, shut out from heaven and earth,  
Fly to the sea, my place of birth,  
There live with daggled mermaids pent,  
And keep on fish perpetual Lent. 90

But since the case appeared so nice,  
She thought it best to take advice.  
The Muses, by the King's permission,  
Though foes to love, attend the session,  
And on the right hand took their places 95  
In order ; on the left, the Graces ;  
To whom she might her doubts propose  
On all emergencies that rose.  
The Muses oft were seen to frown,  
The Graces, half ashamed, look down, 100  
And, 'twas observed, there were but few  
Of either sex among the crew  
Whom she or her assessors knew.  
The goddess soon began to see  
Things were not ripe for a decree, 105  
And said she must consult her books,  
The lovers' Fletas, Bractons, Cokes.  
First to a dapper clerk she beckoned  
To turn to Ovid, Book the Second ;

She then referred them to a place 110

In Virgil (*vide* Dido's case):

As for Tibullus's reports,

They never passed for law in courts:

For Cowley's briefs, and pleas of Waller,  
Still their authority was smaller. 115

There was on both sides much to say:

She'd hear the cause another day,

And so she did, and then a third,

She heard it—there she kept her word:

But with rejoinders or replies, 120

Long bills, and answers stuffed with lies,

Demur, imparlance and essoign,

The parties ne'er could issue join.

For sixteen years the cause was spun,

And then stood where it first begun. 125

Now, gentle Clio, sing or say

What Venus meant by this delay.

The goddess, much perplexed in mind

To see her empire thus declined,

When first this grand debate arose, 130

Above her wisdom to compose,

Conceived a project in her head

To work her ends, which, if it sped,

Would shew the merits of the cause

Far better than consulting laws. 135

In a glad hour Lucina's aid

Produced on earth a wondrous maid,

On whom the queen of love was bent

To try a new experiment.

She threw her law-books on the shelf, 140  
And thus debated with herself :

Since men allege they ne'er can find  
Those beauties in a female mind  
Which raise a flame that will endure  
For ever, uncorrupt and pure, 145  
If 'tis with reason they complain,  
This infant shall restore my reign.  
I'll search where every virtue dwells,  
From courts inclusive down to cells ;  
What preachers talk, or sages write, 150  
These I will gather and unite,  
And represent them to mankind  
Collected in that infant's mind.

This said, she plucked in heaven's high bowers  
A sprig of amaranthine flowers ; 155  
In nectar thrice infuses bays  
Three times refined in Titan's rays ;  
Then calls the Graces to her aid,  
And sprinkles thrice the new-born maid,  
From whence the tender skin assumes 160  
A sweetness above all perfumes ;  
From whence a cleanliness remains,  
Intapable of outward stains ;  
From whence that decency of mind,  
So lovely in the female kind, 165  
Where not one careless thought intrudes  
Less modest than the speech of prudes ;

Where never blush was called in aid-  
That spurious virtue in a maid,  
A virtue but at second hand : 170  
They blush because they understand.

The Graces next would act their part,  
And shewed but little of their art ;  
Their work was half already done ;  
The child with native beauty shone, 175  
The outward form no help required.  
Each breathing on her thrice, inspired  
That gentle, soft, engaging air  
Which in old times adorned the fair,  
And said : “ Vanessa be the name 180  
By which thou shalt be known to fame,  
Vanessa by the gods enrolled :  
Her name on earth shall not be told.”

But still the work was not complete,  
When Venus thought on a deceit. 185  
Drawn by her doves, away she flies  
And finds out Pallas in the skies :  
Dear Pallas, I have been this morn  
To see a lovely infant born,.  
A boy, in yonder Isle below, 190  
So like my own without his bow,  
By beauty could your heart be won,  
You'd swear it is Apollo's son ;  
But it shall ne'er be said, a child  
So hopeful has by me been spoiled ; 195  
I have enough besides to spare,

And give him wholly to your care.

Wisdom's above suspecting wiles :

The queen of learning gravely smiles,  
Down from Olympus comes with joy, 200

Mistakes Vanessa for a boy ;

Then sows within her tender mind

Seeds long unknown to womankind,

For manly bosoms chiefly fit,

The seeds of knowledge, judgment, wit 205

Her soul was suddenly endued

With justice, truth and fortitude,

With honour, which no breath can stain,

Which malice must attack in vain,

With open heart and bounteous hand. 210

But Pallas here was at a stand :

She knew, in our degenerate days,

Bare virtue could not live on praise ;

That meat must be with money bought ;

She therefore, upon second thought, 215

Infused, yet as it were by stealth,

Some small regard for state and wealth,

Of which, as she grew up, there staid

A tincture in the prudent maid :

She managed her estate with care, 220

Yet liked three footmen to her chair.

But lest he should neglect his studies,

Like a young heir, the thrifty goddess

(For fear young Master should be spoiled)

Would use him like a younger child, 225

And, after long computing, found  
'Twould come to just five thousand pound.

The queen of love was pleased and proud  
To see Vanessa thus endowed.

She doubted not but such a dame 230

Through every breast would dart a flame,

That every rich and lordly swain

With pride would drag about her chain,

That scholars would forsake their books

To study bright Vanessa's looks ;

As she advanced, that womankind

Would by her model form their mind,

And all their conduct would be tried

By her, as an unerring guide ;

Offending daughters oft would hear 240

Vanessa's praise rung in their ear ;

Miss Betty, when she does a fault,

Lets fall her knife, or spills the salt,

Will thus be by her mother chid :

" 'Tis what Vanessa never did." 245

Thus by the nymphs and swains adored,

My power shall be again restored,

And happy lovers bless my reign—

So Venus hoped, but hoped in vain.

For, when in time the martial maid 250

Found out the trick that Venus played,

She shakes her helm, she knits her brows,

And, fired with indignation, vows,

To-morrow, e'er the setting sun,



She'll all undo that she had done. 255

But in the poets we may find  
A wholesome law, time out of mind,  
Had been confirmed by Fate's decree,  
That gods, of whatsoe'er degree,  
Resume not what themselves have given, 260

Or any brother-god in Heaven ;  
Which keeps the peace among the gods,  
Or they must always be at odds ;  
And Pallas, if she broke the laws,  
Must yield her foe the stronger cause— 265

A shame for one so much adored  
For wisdom at Jove's council-board.  
Besides, she feared the queen of love  
Would meet with better friends above ;  
And though she must with grief reflect 270

To see a mortal virgin decked  
With graces hitherto unknown  
To female breasts, except her own,  
Yet she would act as best became  
A goddess of unspotted fame. 275

She knew by augury divine  
Venus would fail in her design :  
She studied well the point, and found  
Her foe's conclusions were not sound,  
From premises erroneous brought, 280

And therefore the deduction's naught,  
And must have contrary effects  
To what her treacherous foe expects.

In proper season Pallas meets  
 The queen of love, whom thus she greets 285  
 (For gods, we are by Homer told,  
 Can in celestial language scold):  
 Perfidious goddess! but in vain  
 You formed this project in your brain,  
 A project for your talents fit, 290  
 With much deceit, and little wit.  
 Thou hast, as thou shalt quickly see,  
 Deceived thyself, instead of me;  
 For how can heavenly wisdom prove  
 An instrument to earthly love? 295  
 Know'st thou not yet that men commence  
 Thy votaries, for want of sense?  
 Nor shall Vanessa be the theme  
 To manage thy abortive scheme;  
 She'll prove the greatest of thy foes: 300  
 And yet I scorn to interpose,  
 But, using neither skill nor force,  
 Leave all things to their natural course.

The goddess thus pronounced her doom:  
 When lo! Vanessa in her bloom 305  
 Advanced like Atalanta's star,  
 But rarely seen, and seen from far;  
 In a new world with caution stept,  
 Watched all the company she kept,  
 Well knowing from the books she read 310  
 What dangerous paths young virgins tread;  
 Would seldom at the Park appear,

Nor saw the play-house twice a year ;  
Yet not incurious, was inclined  
To know the converse of mankind. 315

First issued from perfumers' shops  
A crowd of fashionable fops :  
They asked her, how she liked the play ?  
Then told the tattle of the day,  
A duel, fought last night at two, 320

About a lady—you know who ;  
Mentioned a new Italian, come  
Either from Muscovy or Rome ;  
Gave hints of who and who's together,  
Then fell to talking of the weather : 325

Last night was so extremely fine,  
The ladies walked till after nine.  
Then in soft voice, and speech absurd,  
With nonsense every second word,  
With fustian from exploded plays, 330  
They celebrate her beauty's praise,  
Run o'er their cant of stupid lies,  
And tell the murders of her eyes.

With silent scorn Vanessa sat,  
Scarce listening to their idle chat 335  
Further than sometimes by a frown,  
When they grew pert, to pull them down.  
At last she spitefully was bent  
To try their wisdom's full extent,  
And said, she valued nothing less 340  
Than titles, figure, shape and dress,

That merit should be chiefly placed  
 In judgment, knowledge, wit and taste,  
 And these, she offered to dispute,  
 Alone distinguished man from brute ; 345  
 That present times have no pretence  
 To virtue, in the noble sense  
 By Greeks and Romans understood,  
 To perish for our country's good.  
 She named the ancient heroes round, 350  
 Explained for what they were renowned ;  
 Then spoke, with censure or applause,  
 Of foreign customs, rites and laws ;  
 Through nature and through art she rang  
 And gracefully her subject changed : 355  
 In vain : her hearers had no share  
 In all she spoke, except to stare.  
 Their judgment was upon the whole :  
 " That lady is the dullest soul " ;  
 Then tapped their forehead in a jeer, 360  
 As who should say " She wants it here ;  
 She may be handsome, young and rich,  
 But none will burn her for a witch."  
 A party next of glittering dames  
 From round the purlieus of St. James 365  
 Came early, out of pure, good will,  
 To see the girl in deshabelle.  
 Their clamour 'lighting from their chairs  
 Grew louder all the way upstairs,  
 At entrance loudest, where they found 370

The room with volumes littered round.  
Vanessa held Montaigne, and read  
Whilst Mrs. Susan combed her head.  
They called for tea and chocolate,  
And fell into their usual chat, 375  
Discoursing with important face  
On ribbons, fans, and gloves, and lace,  
Shewed patterns just from India brought,  
And gravely asked her what she thought,  
Whether the red or green were best, 380  
And what they cost. Vanessa guessed  
As came into her fancy first,  
Named half the rates, and liked the worst.  
To scandal next. What awkward thing  
Was that, last Sunday in the ring ? 385  
I'm sorry Mopsa breaks so fast,  
I said her face would never last.  
Corinna, with that youthful air,  
Is thirty, and a bit to spare ;  
Her fondness for a certain Earl 390  
Began when I was but a girl.  
Phyllis, who but a month ago  
Was married to the Tunbridge beau,  
I saw coquetting t'other night,  
In public, with that odious knight. 395  
They rallied next Vanessa's dress :  
That gown was made for old Queen Bess.  
Dear Madam, let me see your head ;  
Don't you intend to put on red ?

A petticoat without a hoop ! 400

Sure, you are not ashamed to stoop,  
With handsome garters at your knees,  
No matter what a fellow sees !

Filled with disdain, with rage inflamed,  
Both of herself and sex ashamed, 405

The nymph stood silent, out of spite,  
Nor would vouchsafe to set them right.

Away the fair detractors went,  
And gave by turns their censures vent :  
She's not so handsome, in my eyes ; 410

For wit, I wonder where it lies ;  
She's fair and clean, and that's the most,  
But why proclaim her for a Toast ?

A baby face, no life, no airs,  
But what she learned at country fairs ; 415

Scarce knows what difference is between  
Rich Flanders lace and Colberteen ;

I'll undertake my little Nancy  
In flounces has a better fancy.

With all her wit, I would not ask 420  
Her judgment, how to buy a mask.

We begged her but to patch her face ;  
She never hit one proper place,

Which every girl at five years old  
Can do as soon as she is told. 425

I own that out-of-fashion stuff  
Becomes the creature well enough ;  
The girl might pass, if we could get her

To know the world a little better.

—To know the world ! A modern phrase      430  
For visits, Ombre, balls and plays !

Thus, to the world's perpetual shame,  
The queen of beauty lost her aim.  
Too late with grief she understood  
Pallas had done more harm than good ;      435  
For great examples are but vain  
Where ignorance begets disdain.  
Both sexes, armed with guilt and spite,  
Against Vanessa's power unite ;  
To copy her few nymphs aspired ;      440  
Her virtues fewer swains admired.  
So stars beyond a certain height  
Give mortals neither heat nor light.

Yet some of either sex, endowed  
With gifts superior to the crowd,      445  
With virtue, knowledge, taste and wit,  
She condescended to admit.  
With pleasing arts she could reduce  
Men's talents to their proper use,  
And with address each genius held      450  
To that wherein it most excelled ;  
Thus, making others' wisdom known,  
Could please them, and improve her own.  
A modest youth said something new :  
She placed it in the strongest view.      455  
All humble worth she strove to raise,  
Would not be praised, yet loved to praise.

The learned met with free approach,  
 Although they came not in a coach.  
 Some clergy, too, she would allow, 460  
 Nor quarrelled at their awkward bow ;  
 But this 'was for Cadenus' sake,  
 A gownman of a different make,  
 Whom Pallas, once Vanessa's tutor,  
 Had fixed on for her coadjutor. 465

But Cupid, full of mischief, longs  
 To vindicate his mother's wrongs.  
 On Pallas all attempts are vain.  
 One way he knows to give her pain,  
 Vows on Vanessa's heart to take 470  
 Due vengeance, for her patron's sake.  
 Those early seeds by Venus sown,  
 In spite of Pallas, now were grown,  
 And Cupid hoped they would improve  
 By time, and ripen into love. 475

The boy made use of all his craft,  
 In vain discharging many a shaft  
 Pointed at Colonels, lords and beaux ;  
 Cadenus warded off the blows ;  
 For, placing still some book betwixt, 480  
 The darts were in the cover fixed,  
 Or often blunted, and recoiled,  
 On Plutarch's Morals struck, were spoiled.

The queen of wisdom could foresee,  
 But not prevent the Fate's decree ; 485  
 And human caution tries in vain



To break that adamantine chain.

Vanessa, though by Pallas taught,

By love invulnerable thought,

Searching in books for wisdom's aid, 490

Was in the very search betrayed.

Cupid, though all his darts were lost,

Yet still resolved to spare no cost.

He could not answer to his fame

The triumphs of that stubborn dame, 495

A nymph so hard to be subdued,

Who neither was coquette nor prude.

I find, said he, she wants a Doctor

Both to adore her and instruct her ;

I'll give her what she most admires 500

Among those venerable sires.

Cadenus is a subject fit,

Grown old in politics and wit,

Caressed by ministers of state,

Of half mankind the dread and hate. 505

Whate'er vexations love attend,

She need no rivals apprehend ;

Her sex with universal voice

Must laugh at her capricious choice.

Cadenus many things had writ ; 510

Vanessa much esteemed his wit,

And called for his Poetic Works.

Meantime the boy in secret lurks,

And while the book was in her hand

The urchin from his private stand 515

Took aim, and shot with all his strength  
A dart of such prodigious length,  
It pierced the feeble volume through,  
And deep transfixed her bosom, too.  
Some lines, more moving than the rest, 520  
Stuck to the point that pierced her breast,  
And, borne directly to the heart,  
With pains unknown increased her smart.

Vanessa, not in years a score,  
Dreams of a Gown of forty-four, 525  
Imaginary charms can find  
In eyes with reading almost blind.  
Cadenus now no more appears  
Declined in health, advanced in years ;  
She fancies music in his tongue, 530  
Nor farther looks, but thinks him young.  
What mariner is not afraid  
To venture in a ship decayed ?  
What planter will attempt to yoke  
A sapling with a falling oak ? 535  
As years increase, she brighter shines,  
Cadenus with each day declines,  
And he must fall a prey to time  
While she continues in her prime.

Cadenus, common forms apart, 540  
In every scene had kept his heart,  
Had sighed and languished, vowed and writ,  
For pastime, or to shew his wit,  
But books and time and state affairs

Had spoiled his fashionable airs ; 545  
He now could praise, esteem, approve,  
But understood not what was love.  
His conduct might have made him styled  
A father, and the nymph his child.  
That innocent delight he took 550  
To see the virgin mind her book  
Was but the master's secret joy  
In school to hear the finest boy.  
Her knowledge with her fancy grew ;  
She hourly pressed for something new ; 555  
Ideas came into her mind  
So fast, his lessons lagged behind ;  
She reasoned, without plodding long,  
Nor ever gave her judgment wrong.  
But now a sudden change was wrought ; 560  
She minds no longer what he taught.  
Cadenus was amazed to find  
Such marks of a distracted 'mind ;  
For, though she seemed to listen more  
To all he spoke, than e'er before, 565  
He found her thoughts would absent range,  
Yet guessed not 'whence could spring the change.  
At first he modestly conjectures  
His pupil might be tired, with lectures,  
Which helped to mortify his pride, 570  
Yet gave him not the heart to chide ;  
But in a mild 'dejected strain  
At last he ventured to complain ;

Said, she should be no longer teased,  
Might have her freedom when she pleased, 575  
Was now convinced he acted wrong  
To hide her from the world so long,  
And in dull studies to engage  
One of her tender sex and age,  
That every nymph in envy owned 580  
How she might shine in the *grand monde*,  
And every shepherd was undone  
To see her cloistered like a nun ;  
This was a visionary scheme ;  
He waked, and found it but a dream, 585  
A project far above his skill,  
For nature must be nature still ;  
If he were bolder than became  
A scholar to a courtly dame,  
She might excuse a man of letters ; 590  
Thus tutors often treat their betters,  
And since his talk offensive grew,  
He came to take his last adieu.

Vanessa, filled with just disdain,  
Would still her dignity maintain, 595  
Instructed from her early years  
To scorn the art of female tears.

Had he employed his time so long  
To teach her what was right and wrong,  
Yet could such notions entertain, 600  
That all his lectures were in vain ?  
She owned the wandering of her thoughts,

But he must answer for her faults.  
She well remembered, to her cost,  
That all his lessons were not lost : 605  
Two maxims she could still produce,  
And sad experience taught their use :  
That virtue, pleased by being shown,  
Knows nothing which it dare not own,  
Can make us without fear disclose 610  
Our inmost secrets to our foes ;  
That common forms were not designed  
Directors to a noble mind.  
Now, said the nymph, to let you see  
My actions with your rules agree, 615  
That I can vulgar forms despise,  
And have no secrets to disguise—  
I knew, by what you said and writ,  
How dangerous things were men of wit ;  
You cautioned me against their charms, 620  
But never gave me equal arms ;  
Your lessons found the weakest part,  
Aimed at the head, but reached the heart.  
Cadenus felt within him rise  
Shame, disappointment, guilt, surprise. 625  
He knew not how to reconcile  
Such language with her usual style ;  
And yet her words were 'so expressed,  
He could not hope she spoke in jest.  
His thoughts had wholly been confined 630  
To form and cultivate her mind ;

He hardly knew, till he was told,  
Whether the nymph were young or old ;  
Had met her in a public place  
Without distinguishing her face ; 635  
Much less could his declining age  
Vanessa's earliest thoughts engage ;  
And, if her youth indifference met,  
His person must contempt beget ;  
Or, grant her passion be sincere, 640  
How shall his innocence be clear ?  
Appearances were all so strong,  
The world must think him in the wrong,  
Would say, he made a treacherous use  
Of wit, to flatter and seduce ; 645  
The Town would swear he had betrayed,  
By magic spells, the harmless maid ;  
And every beau would have his jokes,  
That scholars were like other folks,  
And when platonic flights were over 650  
The tutor turned a mortal lover.  
So tender of the young and fair ?  
It shewed a true paternal care :  
Five thousand guineas, in her purse ?  
The Doctor might have fancied worse. 655  
Hardly at length he silence broke,  
And faltered every word he spoke,  
Interpreting her complaisance •  
Just as a man *sans consequence* : •  
She rallied well, he always knew 660

Her manner now was something new ;  
And what she spoke was in an air  
As serious as a tragic player ;  
But those who aim at ridicule  
Should fix upon some certain rule 665  
Which fairly hints they are in jest,  
Else he must enter his protest ;  
For let a man be ne'er so wise,  
He may be caught with sober lies,  
A science which he never taught, 670  
And, to be free, was dearly bought,  
For, take it in its proper light,  
'Tis just what coxcombs call a *bite*.

But not to dwell on things minute,  
Vanessa finished the dispute, 675  
Brought weighty arguments to prove  
That reason was her guide in love ;  
She thought he had himself described,  
His doctrines when she first imbibed ;  
What he had planted, now was grown, 680  
His virtues she might call her own ;  
As he approves, as he dislikes,  
Love or contempt her fancy strikes ;  
Self-love, in nature rooted fast,  
Attends us first, and leaves us last ; 685  
Why she likes him, admire not at her,  
She loves herself, and that's the matter.  
How was her tutor wont to praise  
The genius's of ancient days !

(Those authors he so oft had named 690  
 For learning, wit and wisdom famed),  
 Was struck with love, esteem and awe  
 For persons whom he never saw ;  
 Suppose Cadenus flourished then,  
 He must adore such god-like men ; 695  
 If one short volume could comprise  
 All that was witty, learn'd and wise,  
 How would it be esteemed and read,  
 Although the writer long were dead ?  
 If such an author were alive, 700  
 How all would for his friendship strive,  
 And come in crowds to see his face !  
 And this she takes to be her case.  
 Cadenus answers every end,  
 The book, the author and the friend ; 705  
 The utmost her desires will reach  
 Is but to learn what he can teach ;  
 His converse is a system fit  
 Alone to fill up all her wit,  
 While every passion of her mind 710  
 In him is centred and confined.

Love can with speech inspire a mute,  
 And taught Vanessa to dispute.  
 This topic, never touched before,  
 Displayed her eloquence the more : 715  
 Her knowledge, with such pains acquired,  
 By this new passion grew inspired.  
 Through this she made all objects pass,



Which gave a tincture o'er the mass,  
As rivers, though they bend and twine, 720  
Still to the sea their course incline,  
Or as philosophers, who find  
Some favourite system to their mind,  
In every point to make it fit  
Will force all nature to submit. 725

Cadenus, who could ne'er suspect  
His lessons would have such effect,  
Or be so artfully applied,  
Insensibly came on her side.  
It was an unforeseen event; ,730  
Things took a turn he never meant;  
Whoe'er excels in what we prize  
Appears a hero in our eyes;  
Each girl, when pleased with what is taught,  
Will have the teacher in her thought; 735  
When Miss delights in her spinet  
A fiddler may a fortune get;  
A blockhead with melodious voice  
In boarding-schools may have his choice,  
And oft the dancing-master's art 740  
Climbs from the toe to touch the heart;  
In learning let a nymph delight,  
The pedant gets a mistress by't.  
Cadenus, to his grief and shame,  
Could scarce oppose Vanessa's flame; 745  
And though her arguments were strong,  
At least could hardly wish them wrong;

Howe'er it came he could not tell,  
 But sure, she never talked so well.  
 His pride began to interpose ; 750  
 Preferred before a crowd of beaux !  
 So bright a nymph to come unsought !  
 Such wonder by his merit wrought !  
 'Tis merit must with her prevail ;  
 He never knew her judgment fail, 755  
 She noted all she ever read,  
 And had a most discerning head.

'Tis an old maxim in the schools  
 That flattery's the food of fools,  
 Yet now and then your men of wit 760  
 Will condescend to take a bit.

So when Cadenus could not hide,  
 He chose to justify his pride,  
 Construing the passion she had shown  
 Much to her praise, more to his own. 765  
 Nature in him had merit placed,  
 In her, a most judicious taste.  
 Love, hitherto a transient guest,  
 Ne'er held possession of his breast ;  
 So long attending at the gate, 770  
 Disdained to enter in so late.  
 Love why do we one passion call,  
 When 'tis a compound of them all ?  
 Where hot and cold, where sharp and sweet  
 In all their equipages meet, 775  
 Where pleasures mixed with pains appear,

Sorrow with joy, and hope with fear,  
Wherein his dignity and age  
Forbid Cadenus to engage :  
But friendship in its greatest height, 780  
A constant, rational delight,  
On virtue's basis fixed to last  
When love's allurements long are past,  
Which gently warms, but cannot burn,  
He gladly offers in return ; 785  
His want of passion will redeem  
With gratitude, respect, esteem,  
With what devotion we bestow  
When goddesses appear below.  
While thus Cadenus entertains 790  
Vanessa in exalted strains,  
The nymph in sober words entreats  
A truce with all sublime conceits ;  
For why such raptures, flights, and fancies  
To her, who durst not read romances ; 795  
In lofty style to make replies  
Which he had taught her to despise ?  
But when her tutor will affect  
Devotion, duty and respect,  
He fairly abdicates the throne ; 800  
The government is now her own ;  
He has a forfeiture incurred ;  
She vows to take him at his word,  
And hopes he will not think it strange  
If both should now their stations change. 805

- 1 The nymph will have her turn to be  
The tutor, and her pupil he,  
Though she already can discern  
Her scholar is not apt to learn,  
Or wants capacity to reach 810  
The science she designs to teach ;  
Wherein his genius was below  
The skill of every common beau,  
Who, though he cannot spell, is wise  
Enough to read a lady's eyes, 815  
And will each accidental glance  
Interpret for a kind advance.  
But what success Vanessa met  
Is to the world a secret yet.  
Whether the nymph, to please her swain 820  
Talks in a high romantic strain,  
Or whether he at last descends  
To act with less seraphic ends,  
Or, to compound the business, whether  
They temper love and books together, 825  
Must never to mankind be told,  
Nor shall the conscious Muse unfold.  
Meantime the mournful queen of love  
Led but a weary life above.  
She ventures now to leave the skies, 830  
Grown by Vanessa's conduct wise ;  
For though by one perverse event  
Pallas had crossed her first intent,  
Though her design was not obtained,

Yet had she much experience gained,      835  
 And, by the project vainly tried,  
 Could better now the Cause decide.

She gave due notice that both parties  
*Coram Regina prox' die Martis*  
 Should at their peril without fail      840

Come and appear, and save their bail.  
 All met, and silence thrice proclaimed,  
 One lawyer to each side was named.

The judge discovered in her face  
 Resentments for her late disgrace,      845

And, full of anger, shame and grief,  
 Directed them to mind their brief,  
 Nor spend their time to shew their reading ;  
 She'd have a summary proceeding.

She gathered under every head      850  
 The sum of what each lawyer said ;  
 Gave her own reasons last ; and then  
 Decreed the cause against the men.

But, in a weighty case like this,  
 To shew she did not judge amiss,      855

Which evil tongues might else report,  
 She made a speech in open court ;  
 Wherein she grievously complains

“ How she was cheated by the swains,  
 On whose petition (humbly shewing      860

That women were not worth the wooing,  
 And that, unless the sex would mend,  
 The race of lovers soon must end)

She was at Lord knows what expense  
To form a nymph of wit and sense, 865  
A model for her sex designed,  
Who never could one lover find.  
She saw her favour was misplaced ;  
The fellows had a wretched taste ;  
She needs must tell them to their face 870  
They were a stupid, senseless race,  
And were she to begin again,  
She'd study to reform the men,  
Or add some grains of folly more  
To women than they had before, 875  
To put them on an equal foot ;  
And this, or nothing else, would do't ;  
This might their mutual fancy strike,  
Since every being loves its like :  
But now, repenting what was done, 880  
She left all business to her son ;  
She put the world in his possession,  
And let him use it at discretion."

The Crier was ordered to dismiss  
The Court, who made his last Oyes ! 885  
The goddess would no longer wait,  
But, rising from her chair of state,  
Left all below at six and seven,  
Harnessed her doves, and flew to heaven.

## TO LOVE

*(Found in Esther Vanhomrigh's desk, after her death, in Swift's handwriting.)*

**I**N all I wish, how happy should I be,  
Thou grand deluder, were it not for thee !  
So weak art thou, that fools thy power despise  
And yet so strong, thou triumph'st o'er the wise.  
Thy traps are laid with such peculiar art,  
They catch the cautious, let the rash depart.  
Most nets are filled by want of thought and care ;  
But too much thinking brings us to thy snare,  
Where, held by thee, in slavery we stay,  
And throw the pleasing part of life away.  
But, what does most my indignation move,  
Discretion ! thou wert ne'er a friend to love :  
Thy chief delight is to defeat those arts  
By which he kindles mutual flames in hearts ;  
While the blind, loitering god is at his play,  
Thou steal'st his golden-pointed darts away ;  
Those darts which never fail ; and in their stead  
Convey'st malignant arrows tipt with lead.  
The heedless god, suspecting no deceits,  
Shoots on, and thinks he has done wondrous feats ;

\But the poor nymph, who feels her vitals burn,  
And from her shepherd can find no return,  
Laments, and rages at the power divine,  
When, curst Discretion, all the fault was thine.  
Cupid and Hymen thou hast set at odds,  
And bred such feuds between those kindred gods  
That Venus cannot reconcile her sons ;  
When one appears, away the other runs.  
The former scales, wherein he used to poise  
Love against love, and equal joys with joys,  
Are now filled up with avarice and pride,  
Where titles, power and riches still subside.  
Then, gentle Venus, to thy father run,  
And tell him how thy children are undone ;  
Prepare his bolts to give one fatal blow,  
And strike Discretion to the shades below.



## A REBUS BY VANESSA

**C**UT the name of the man who his mistress  
denied,

And let the first of it be only applied <sup>1</sup>

To join with the prophet who David did chide <sup>2</sup> ;

Then say what a horse is that runs very fast,<sup>3</sup>

And that which deserves to be first put the last.

Spell all then, and put them together, to find

The name and the virtues of him I designed.

Like the patriarch in Egypt he's versed in the  
state,

Like the prophet in Jewry he's free with the great,

Like a racer he flies to succour with speed

When his friends want his aid, or desert is in need.

<sup>1</sup> Jo(seph).    <sup>2</sup> Nathan.    <sup>3</sup> Swift.

## THE DEAN'S ANSWER

THE nymph who wrote this in an amorous fit,  
I cannot but envy the pride of her wit,  
Which thus she will venture profusely to throw  
On so mean a design, and a subject so low.  
For mean's her design, and her subject as mean,  
The first but a rebus, the last but a dean.  
A dean's but a parson, and what is a rebus ?  
A thing never known to the Muses or Phœbus ;  
The corruption of verse ; for, when all is done,  
It is but a paraphrase made on a pun.  
But a genius like hers no subject can stifle ;  
It shews and discovers itself through a trifle.  
By reading this trifle, I quickly began  
To find her a great wit, but the dean a small man.  
Rich ladies will furnish their garrets with stuff  
Which others for mantuas would think fine enough :  
So the wit that is lavishly thrown away here  
Might furnish a second-rate poet a year.  
Thus much for the verse : we proceed to the next,  
Where the nymph has entirely forsaken her text :  
Her fine panegyrics are quite out of season ;  
And what she describes to be merit is treason.

The changes which faction has made in the state/  
Have put the Dean's politics quite out of date :  
Now no one regards what he utters with freedom,  
And should he write pamphlets, no great man  
    would read 'em ;  
And should want or desert stand in need of his aid,  
This racer would prove but a dull foundered jade.

A DECREE FOR CONCLUDING THE TREATY  
BETWEEN DR. SWIFT AND MRS. LONG <sup>1</sup>

[? *Early in 1708.*]

WHEREAS it hath been signified to us that there is now a Treaty of Acquaintance on foot between Dr. Swift, of Leicester-Fields, on the one part, and Mrs. Long, of Albemarle-Street, on the other part. And whereas the said Dr. Swift, upon the score of his merit and extraordinary qualities, doth claim the sole and undoubted right, that all persons whatsoever shall make such advances to him as he pleases to demand, any law, claim, custom, privilege of sex, beauty, fortune or quality to the contrary notwithstanding.

And whereas the said Mrs. Long, humbly acknowledging and allowing the right of the said Doctor, doth yet insist upon certain privileges

<sup>1</sup> The title of the small volume from which this piece is extracted is: "Letters, Poems and Tales, Amorous, Satyrical and Gallant, which past between Several Persons of Distinction. Now published from their respective Originals, found in the Cabinet of that Celebrated Toast, Mrs. Anne Long, since her Decease. London. E. Curll. 1718."

and exceptions, as a Lady of the Toast ; which privileges, she doth allege, are excepted out of the Doctor's general claim, and which she cannot betray without injuring the whole body whereof she is a member : By which impediment the said Treaty is not yet brought to a conclusion, to the great grievance and damage of Mrs. Vanhomrigh and her fair daughter, Hessy.

And whereas the decision of this weighty cause is referred to Us, in our judicial capacity : We, out of our tender regard to truth and justice, having heard and duly considered the allegations of both parties, do declare, adjudge, decree and determine that the said Mrs. Long, notwithstanding any privileges she may claim as aforesaid as a Lady of the Toast, shall, without essoign or demur, in two hours after the publishing of this our decree, make all advances to the said Doctor that he shall demand ; and that the said advances shall not be made to the said Doctor as *un homme sans consequence*, but purely upon account of his great merit.

And we do hereby strictly forbid the said Mrs. Vanhomrigh and her fair daughter, Hessy, to aid,abet, comfort or encourage her, the said Mrs. Long in her disobedience for the future. And in consideration of the said Mrs. Long's being a Toast, we think it just and reasonable ~~that~~ the said Doctor should permit her in all companies

to give herself the reputation of being one of his acquaintance, which no other lady shall presume to do, upon any pretence whatsoever, without his especial leave and licence first had and obtained.

*By Especial Command,*

G. V. HOMRIGH.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vanessa's brother, Ginkel, who was probably not quite fourteen at the time this document was drawn up.

## VANESSA'S WILL

**I**N the name of God, Amen. I Esther Vanhomrigh, one of the daughters of Bartholomew Vanhomrigh, late of the City of Dublin, Esq., deceased, being of sound and disposing mind and memory, do make and ordain this my last will and testament, in manner and form following, that is to say :—First, I recommend my soul into the hands of Almighty God, and my body I commit to the earth, to be buried at the discretion of my executors hereinafter named. In the next place, I give and devise all my worldly substance, whether in lands, tenements, hereditaments or trusts, and all my real and personal estate, of what nature or kind soever, unto the Reverend Doctor George Berkly, one of the fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, and Robert Marshall of Clonmell, Esq., their heirs, executors and administrators, chargeable nevertheless with, and subject and liable to the payment of all such debts of my own contracting, as I shall owe at the time of my death, as also unto the payment of the several legacies hereinafter bequeathed, or which shall hereafter be bequeathed by any codicil to be

attached to this my last will and testament :  
*Item*, I give and bequeath to Erasmus Lewis of London, Esq., the sum of twenty-five pounds sterling, to buy a ring : *Item*, I give and bequeath to Francis Annesly of the city of London, Esq., twenty-five pounds sterling, to buy a ring : *Item*, I give and bequeath to John Hooks, Esq., of Gaunts in Dorsetshire, twenty-five pounds sterling, to buy a ring : *Item*, I give unto the Right Reverend Father in God, William King, Lord Archbishop of Dublin, twenty-five pounds sterling, to buy a ring : *Item*, I give and bequeath unto the Right Reverend Father in God, Theop. Bolton, Lord Archbishop of Clonfert, twenty-five pounds sterling, to buy a ring : *Item*, I give and bequeath unto Robert Lindsey, of the city of Dublin, Esq., twenty-five pounds sterling, to buy a ring : *Item*, I give and bequeath unto Edmund Shuldham of the City of Dublin, Esq., twenty-five pounds sterling, to buy a ring : *Item*, I give and bequeath unto William Lingin of the castle of Dublin, Esq., twenty-five pounds sterling, to buy a ring : *Item*, I give and bequeath unto the Rev. Mr. John Antrobus, my cousin, the like sum of money, to buy a ring : *Item*, I give and bequeath unto Bryan Robinson, doctor of physick in the city of Dublin, fifteen pounds sterling, to buy a ring : *Item*, I give and bequeath unto Mr. Edward Cloker of the city of Dublin, fifteen pounds sterling,



to buy a ring : *Item*, I give and bequeath to, Mr. William Marshall of the city of Dublin, fifteen pounds sterling, to buy a ring : *Item*, I give and bequeath to John Finey, son of George Finey of Kildrought in the county of Kildare, and godson to my sister, the sum of twenty-five pounds sterling, to be paid him when he shall attain the age of twenty-one years : Also I give and bequeath to his mother, Mrs. Mary Finey, the sum of ten pounds sterling, to buy mourning ; and to Mrs. Ann Wakefield, her sister, of the parish of St. Andrews in the city of Dublin, the like sum, to buy mourning : *Item*, I give and bequeath unto Ann Kindon, who is now my servant, the sum of twenty-five pounds sterling, to buy mourning ; and to her daughter, Ann Clinkskells, the like sum of money, to buy mourning : *Item*, I give and bequeath unto every servant that shall live with me at the time of my death half a year's wages ; and to the poor of the parish, where I shall happen to die, five pounds sterling : And I do hereby make, constitute and appoint the said Dr. George Berkly, and Robert Marshall, Esq., of Clonmel, sole executors of this my last will and testament : And I do hereby revoke and make void all former and other wills and testaments by me in any wise heretofore made, either in word or writing, and declare this to be my last will and testament. In witness whereof I, the

said Esther Vanhomrigh, have hereunto set my hand and seal, this first day of May, in the year of our Lord 1723.

E. VANHOMRIGH. (*Seal.*)

Signed, published and declared by the said Esther Vanhomrigh, for and as her last will and testament, in presence of us, who attest the same by subscribing our names in the presence of her the said testatrix.

JAS. DOYLE. ED. THRUSH. DARBY GAFNY.

The last will and testament of Esther Vanhomrigh, late deceased (having, and so forth), was proved in common form of law, and probat granted by the most Reverend Father in God Thomas, and so forth, to the Reverend George Berkely and Robert Marshall, the executors, they being first sworn personally. Dated the 6th of June, 1723.

A true copy, which I attest,

JOHN HAWKINS, *Dep. Reg.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This document is reprinted from Scott's edition of Swift's Works, vol. xix, p. 454.



### III

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS



London, *February 10th*, 1710-11.

SIR,

I wish you and all men of business would observe one rule, of sending people word where to direct to you. For I hope you do not think that when anybody has been 5 months in London, they remember where anybody lodges in Dublin. I had your letter yesterday ; and you are to know that I am fallen out with the whole Temple family, on account of something I publisht last year of Sir Wm. Temples without their consent.<sup>1</sup> However, I went this morning to see Harry Temple,<sup>2</sup> and it is the first time I have done so since I came for England, as indeed the first visit I ever made him in my life, though we were very well acquainted before he was married. I began with asking him how Mr. Mall did. He said, very well, and no appearance of his dying. Then I told him your story—said you were a person I had long known and for whom several people of consideration would be bound ; and I gave the character I

<sup>1</sup> His *Memoirs*, Part III. See Swift's letter on the subject to Lady Giffard in *Correspondence*, Vol. i, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Temple, nephew of Sir William, and afterwards Lord Palmerston.

am sure you deserve. I told him that all I said was more for his service than yours ; that whenever he got that Office, if he thought of any removals, he would find it his interest to make use of you. He said he had been already applied to by many people, but would make no promise to anybody. He agreed with me that if any removals were made, you would be the person fittest to be put in ; and he very readily writt your name and your pretensions in a large paper-book that was in his scrutore. I desired him, whenever he had that Office, to enquire your character, and if it did not answer, I would ask nothing in your behalf. I read that part of your letter to him which I thought proper, and by what he said to me I am almost confident you may reckon upon some benefit by it. However, I will try one trick more : I will find out who has power with him, and see whether by the promise of one of your two friends (I mean, 100 Guinneas) we may not engage him. But that must be as time and opportunity offers. And if you have any other proposals or scheme, I desire you will let me know ; for I will be sure either to serve you, or tell you freely that I can not. But what you desire in your letter was exactly in my way, being in my opinion as as<sup>1</sup> much for his advantage as yours. And I will make it my business to

<sup>1</sup> " as " repeated in the MS.

watch Mr. Mall's health, if he be in Town. The expression I always used was, that in case there should be any removals, you might have the benefit of it. And this is all the account I can give you.

Mrs. Percivall has desired me these two years to buy her a watch and chain and [a]<sup>1</sup> hook. They will come to about £38. He<sup>2</sup> has sent me a bill for £23, and I am to receive £10 more from a legacy, which may not be paid these 20 years, and the other £5 I know nothing of. He may be sure I cannot advance a farthing for him—I am not so rich here—and therefore [un]less<sup>1</sup> he sends me a bill for £15 I will let Mr. Tompion sell the watch, and I shall be shamed into the bargain. A p—— of his little stingy temper! I will send it by the Duke of Ormond if I get the money. Pray let him know all this.

I desire my humble services to your Lady, and that you will get me a pint of wine and a chicken against I come for Ireland, which I suppose will be in Summer.

I am your

Most faithfull

Humble Servant,

J. SWIFT.

<sup>1</sup> MS. holed.

<sup>2</sup> John, the father of Robert Percival, to whom No. v is addressed. This letter was probably addressed to Thomas Staunton (*see* Introduction).



## ii

*Addressed:* To Sr Andrew Fountain.

[7th November, 1711.] <sup>1</sup>

All that may be ; but I stayd yesterday at home for you till two, and if I ever trust to your appointments again, may I stay till two and twenty. What made your Hangdog tell mine that he had orders to send Doctor I know not who after you to Lord Pembroke, and that from thence you were to come and call upon me ? For, not trusting to you, I sent my man, and he brought me this answer. Why, Lord Dartmouth and 'Mr. St. John are neither of them yet come to Town, and I shall not go fetch them. As to breakfasting, I will infallibly breakfast with you this morning, and come exactly at ten. To morrow we will tantony<sup>2</sup> as you say, and I will wait for you infallibly till you come. We will drink our Punch on Friday exactly at four a clock without fail.

<sup>1</sup> This date is proved by Swift's relation of the incident in the *Journal to Stella*, November 6th, 1711. See *Prose Works*, Vol. II, p. 276. This letter is taken from the MS. containing the Swift and Vanessa correspondence. It was no doubt given to Vanessa by Sir Andrew Fountaine, who was one of the Vanhomrighs' circle. But it has been transferred to this section of the book in order to leave to the first part as much unity as the fragmentary material will allow.

<sup>2</sup> This strange word is not very clear in the manuscript. If it be correctly read, we may suppose it to be a verb invented by Fountaine and meaning "to eat pork."

P.S. Pray get all things ready for breakfast. Have the coffee, tea and chocolate cut and dry in so many pots, for I will most infallibly come this morning, and very early. The scoundrel you sent is gone to Bloomsbury, so that I fear I shall be with you before my letter. If I do, pray let me know it by a line. And be so kind to burn this before you read it. I am in such hast I have not time to correct the style or adjust the periods ; and I blush to expose myself before so great a critick. You know I write without the assistance of books, and my man can witness that I began and finisht this in three quarters of an hour. Knowing that your man will infallibly come back for this letter, I have sent it by Patrick, who is not yet returned. Pray dispatch him as soon as you can, that when your man comes back Patrick may know of him whether he will call or no.

iii

*Addressed :* To Mrs. Rochfort.<sup>1</sup>

Dublin, *September 22nd*, 1718.

Madam,

Mr. Rochfort tells me that he apprehends My Lord and you will hardly come over this Winter ;

<sup>1</sup> This was probably the wife of Robert Rochfort, Lord Baron, ("My Lord"). "Mr. Rochfort" was probably their son, George, with whom Swift had been staying at Gaulstown a few weeks before the date of this letter.

and at the same time I must tell you that I am mighty desirous to have My Lord Harley's and his Lady's presents,<sup>1</sup> and have desired Mr. Nedley, when he waits on you, that he will take the custody of them. I humbly thank you for the care you have been at, but am extreamly angry at My Lord's and your long absence. I desire you will present my most humble service to His Lordship.

I am,

Madam,

Your most obedient

and most humble servant,

J. SWIFT. <sup>a</sup>

iv

*Addressed :* To Thomas Staunton, Esq.,  
at his House on Usher's Key.

Dear Tom,

The inclosed I received from my manager, Robert Proudfoot, and what he says was the same I always suspected. You will please with

<sup>1</sup> These gifts had been offered in the previous April, and Swift had been at some trouble to find a reliable person to bring them over from London. See letters in *Correspondence*, Vol. iii, pp. 4, 6.

your usual kindness to act what you think convenient.

I am ever yours,  
J. S.

Deanery House,  
January 5th, 1725.

My humble service to your family.

V

*Addressed :* To Thomas Staunton, Esq.,  
at his House on Usher's Key.

Dear Tom,

I have feed Mr. Lyndsay<sup>1</sup> to look into Mr. Lightburn's<sup>2</sup> Decree, and advise whether it would be security to lend him £800 upon it, and he hath not yet determined the matter. Meantime Mr. Lightburn tells me he is impatient to be out of Mr. Percival's debt, and you call upon him for the interest, which he would gladly pay, principal and all. You are acting for your clyent Percival, as you ought, and I am acting to save Mr. Lightburn from ruin. He marryed the daughter of my near relation,<sup>3</sup> for whom I had great kindness and to whom I ow some obligations; and I think the

<sup>1</sup> For another legal case submitted by Swift to Lindsay, see *Prose Works*, Vol. vii, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> Swift's curate at Laracor. See *Correspondence*, General Index, for references.

<sup>3</sup> Hannah, daughter of Swift's cousin, Willoughby Swift.

poor gentleman hath suffered enough, and therefore I shall help him as far as it is safe for me. He will pay you when the Writings are finished—between him and me—which I hope will be in a very few days.

I am ever

Yours,

J. SWIFT.

Deanery House,  
December 15th, 1728.

I hope your family are all in health, and desire to present my humble service to them.

vi

*Addressed :* To Robert Percival, Esq.

Sir,

Mr. Daniel Griffin tells me you will pay me no tythes, but stop them on account of an island, which I held from your Father for two shillings per annum, and payd him constantly till his death. I believe he has been dead about twelve years, and I have not been in possession of it these seven years at least, and you have stopt at least four or five years' tyths on that account. This odd way of dealing among you folks of great estates in land and money, although I have been used to, I cannot well reconcile myself with, especially when you never give me above a quarter value for your tythes, on which account alone you

should not brangle with me. It is strange that clergymen have more trouble with one or two squires, and meet with more injustice from them, than with fifty farmers. If your tenants payd your rents as you pay your tyths, you would have cause to complain terribly. By my computation you value that island at fourty pounds an acre, and would make me pay the same rate seven years after I gave it up. This is what I cannot well afford, though I am with great truth

Your

most obedient,

humble servant,

JONATH. SWIFT.

Deanery house,

December 11th, 1729.

vii

*Addressed :* To Robert Percival, Esqr.,  
at Knightsbrook, near  
Trim,

County of Meath.

*Postmark :* [J]a. 3.

*Endorsed :* Sir, pray return the Cover of this  
Letter.

Cha. Nuttall.

Dublin, January 3rd, 1729-30.

Sir,

Seeing your frank on the outside, and the address in the same hand, it was obvious who was the

writer ; and before I opened it, a worthy friend being with me, I told him the subject of the difference between us : that your tythes being generally worth £5 or £6 a year, and by the terror of your squireship frightening my agent to take what you graciously thought fit to give, you wronged me of half my due every year ; that having held from your father an island worth threepence a year, which I planted, and paid two shillings annually for, and being out of possession of the said island seven or eight years, there could not possibly be above 4s. due to you ; for which you have thought fit to stay 3 or 4 years of tyths at your own rate of £2 5s. a year (as I remember), and still continue to stay it, on pretence that the said island was not surrendered to you in form ; although you have cutt down more plantations of willows and abeilles<sup>1</sup>, than would purchase a dozen islands. I told my friend, that this talent of squires formerly prevayled very much in the County of Meath ; that as to your self, from the badness of your education, against all my advice and endeavors, and from the cast of your nature, as well as another circumstance which I shall not mention, I expected nothing from you that became a gentleman ; that I had expostulated this scurvy matter very gently with

<sup>1</sup> Abeles, white poplars.

you ; that I conceived this letter was an answer ; that from the prerogative of a good estate,<sup>1</sup> the practice of lording over a few Irish wretches, and from the natural want of better thinking, I was sure your answer would be extremely rude and stupid, full of very bad language in all senses ; that a bear in a wilderness will as soon fix on a philosopher as on a cottager, and a man wholly void of education, judgment or distinction of persons has no regard in his insolence but to the passion of fear, and how heartily I wished, that to make you show your humility, your quarrell had been rather with a Captain of Dragoons than the Dean of St. Patricks.

All this happened before my opening your letter ; which being read, my friend told me I was an ill guesser ; that you affirm you despise me only as a clergy-man, by your own confession, and that you had good reason, because clergymen pretend to learning, wherein you value your self as what you are an utter stranger to.

I took some pains in providing and advising about your education ; but since you have made so ill use of my rules I cannot deny, according to your own principles, that your usage of me is

<sup>1</sup> The printed version here adds "however gotten, and," which seems to be pure invention. In the manuscript there are a few words which have been rather thoroughly cancelled, but look like "the fu... of guiding . . . and."



just. You are wholly out of my danger: the weapons I use will do you no hurt, and to that which would keep nicer men in aw, you are<sup>1</sup> insensible. A needle against a stone wall can make no impression. Your faculty lyes in making bargains: stick to that: leave your children a better estate than your father left you, as he left you much more than your grandfather left him. Your father and you are much wiser than I, who gave amongst you fifty years purchase for land, for which I am not to see one farthing. This was intended as an encouragement for a clergyman to reside among you, whenever any of your posterity shall be able to distinguish a man from a beast. One thing I desire you will be set right in: I do not despise all squires. It is true, I despise the bulk of them. But, pray take notice, that a squire must have some merit before I shall honour him with my contempt. For I do not despise a fly, a maggot or a mite.

If you send me an answer to this, I shall not read it, but open it before company, and in their presence burn it; for no other reason but the detestation of bad spelling, no<sup>2</sup> grammar, and that pertness which proceeds from ignorance and an invincible want of tast.

I have ordered a copy of this letter to be taken,

<sup>1</sup> 'wholly cancelled.

<sup>2</sup> *Substituted for bad.*

with an intention to print it, as a mark of my esteem for you ; which however perhaps I shall not pursue ; for I could willingly excuse our two names from standing in the same paper, since I am confident you have as little desire of fame as I have to give it you.

I wish many happy new years to you and your family, and am with truth,

Your friend and humble servant,

J. SWIFT.

Let me add something serious ; that, as it is held an imprudent thing to provoke value, so I confess it was imprudent in me to provoke rudeness, which as it was my own standing rule never to do except in cases where I had power to punish it, so my error proceeded from a better opinion of you than you have thought fit to make good ; for, with every fault in your nature, your education and your understanding, I never imagined you so utterly devoyd of knowing some little distinction between persons.

.viii

I must desire the favour of you to call at the Deanery by four or five a clock this afternoon, about some defects in the deeds in Mr. Lynch's

affair,<sup>1</sup> which must be some way made up before they are registered. Among other things, there [is] to be an acquittance for the receipt of the £2000 endorsed on the back of the deeds. Pray do not fayl me.

I am yours, &c.

Deanery-house,  
August 4th, 1732.

ix

*Addressed :* To John Rochfort, Esq.,  
at his House in Jervas-Street,  
Dublin.

[Sir,<sup>2</sup>

Pray do me] a favour as a club-man [to send the enclosed to Mrs. Whiteway, who [lives not far] from you, in Abby-Street, over [against the Glass-house,<sup>3</sup> but nearer to your [end of the] Street. I hope your Lady [and you are] well. I am here with Doctor [ . . . Sherid]an to avoyd hearing of your [ . . . I endur]ed a dirty,

<sup>1</sup> Probably a mortgage or similar transaction. See *Correspondence*, Vol. vi, p. 36, footnote. This little note is very likely addressed to Thomas Staunton.

<sup>2</sup> The enclosed letter to Mrs. Whiteway, and Swift's previous letter to her, both survive. From them we can reconstruct the sense of most of the missing passages in this note. See Introduction.

<sup>3</sup> John Rocque's *Exact Survey of Dublin* (1756) shows the "Glass Houſe" standing near the Great Marlborough Street end of Abbey Street, on the south side.

weary journey, but [ . . . ]re than within  
 •w[ . . . h]earing of your brethren's villanies.

I [am eve]r

Your

&c., J. S.

My love to the Grattans.

My humble Service to your Lady and Mrs.  
 Staunton.

Cavan, Nov. 8th, 1735.

X

*Addressed:* To John Rochfort, Esq.

Sir,

I was looking in some of Doctor Sheridan's letters about the money you owed him for your nephew,<sup>1</sup> and onely find the sum to be ten pounds, seven shillings; and Mrs Brackley in a dozen letters teizeth me about it. All I can do is to sign a receipt for the money and get Mr. Henry<sup>2</sup> to transmitt it to London. Therefore I desire you will send me the money and such a receipt as you

<sup>1</sup> There are many references to this debt in letters exchanged between Swift and Sheridan. See, e.g., *Correspondence*, Vol. v, pp. 308, 311, 330, 337, 347. In another letter (Vol. v, p. 342) Sheridan says: "I hope Mr. — will not disappoint us and then poor Mrs. — will be relieved." Does this refer to the transaction proposed in the above note?

<sup>2</sup> The attorney. See *Correspondence*, Index.

would have me sign, which I will do before a witness, and give it to the messenger you send.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient, &c.,

J. SWIFT.

Deanery-house,

May 3<sup>d</sup>, 1737.

xi

*Addressed :* To John Rochfort, Esq.

Sir,

That you may not be in pain, I send your own original of the receipt you desire, and witnessed by Mrs. Ridgway.<sup>1</sup> I shall to morrow transmitt the money to morrow<sup>2</sup> by Mr. Henry to that woman, Mrs. Brackley.

I am your most

obedient,

&c.,

J. SWIFT.

May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1737.

<sup>1</sup> Swift mentions her in his will as "now of my family." She was his housekeeper.

<sup>2</sup> *Sic* MS.

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